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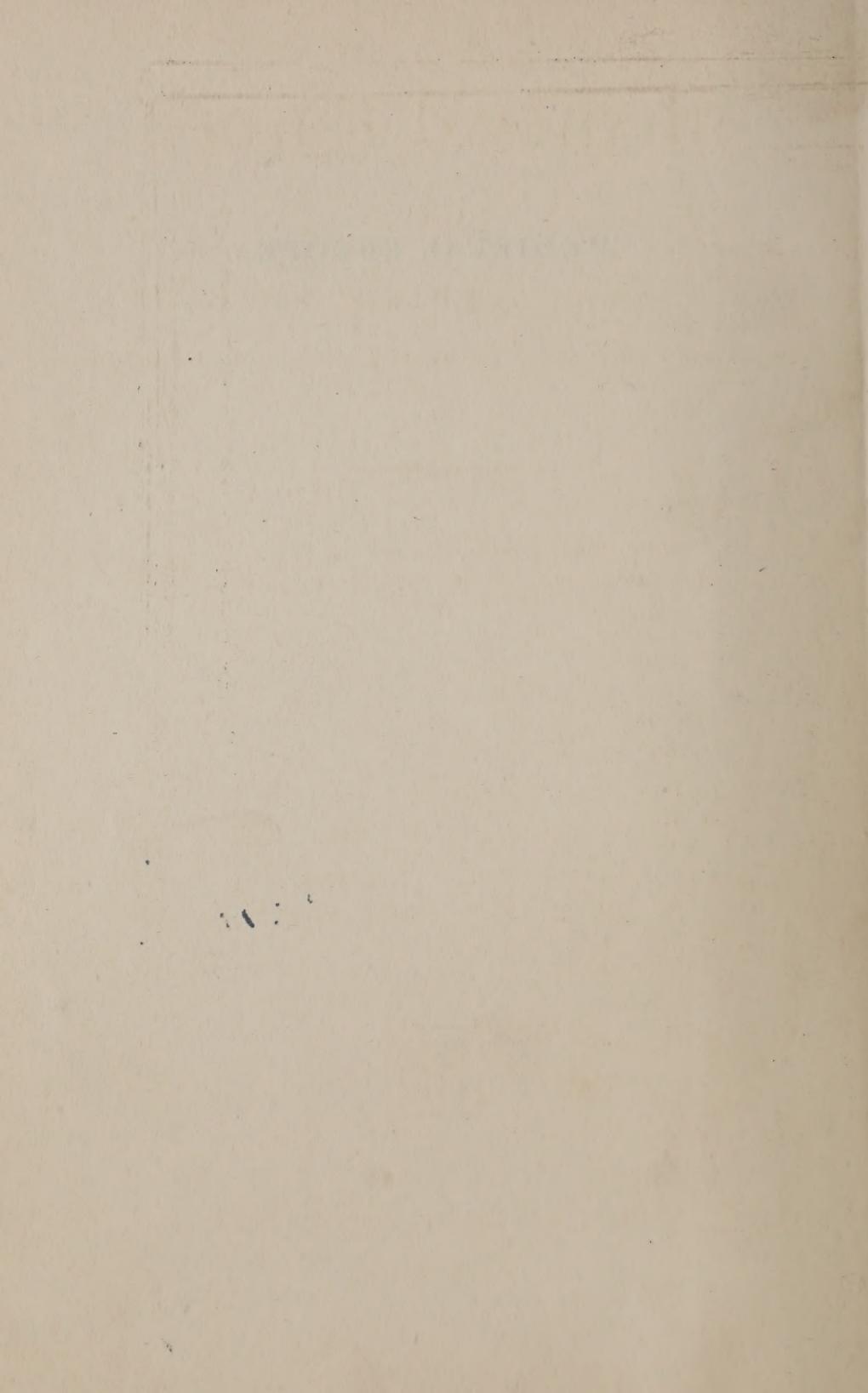
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MEDIEVAL EUROPE



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Medieval Europe

BY

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True views on Mediaevalism, Time alone will bring,
But, as far as we can judge, it's something like this sort of thing:

-Patience.



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TO
ELEANOR AND BUNNY

PREFACE

THIS book owes its existence to an indolence that was rapidly becoming chronic, for it represents a course in Medieval History that the author was giving and probably would have continued to give but for its publication. No apology should be offered for doing what one has not been obliged to do, but the hope may be expressed that, if the labor to produce an elephant seems to have brought forth only a mouse, gentle critics will admit that it is at least a beast.

The author wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to: — The Clarendon Press for its kind permission to quote extensively from Salzman, *English Life in the Middle Ages*, Wright and Sinclair, *History of Later Latin Literature*, Raby, *Christian Latin Poetry*, and from Foligno, *Latin Thought in the Middle Ages*; to The Macmillan Company, which graciously allowed him to make liberal use of the *Cambridge Medieval History*; to Constable and Company (London) and R. R. Smith and Company (New York) for his use of Miss Waddell's *Wandering Scholars* and *Mediæval Latin Lyrics*; to F. S. Crofts and Company which placed Thorndike, *Short History of Civilization* at his disposal, and to the Century Company which did likewise with Thompson, *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*. He appeals to the clemency of the many scholars whose ideas and phrases have been absorbed, wittingly and unwittingly, for he readily admits, with Lessing, that he "should be poor, cold, short-sighted indeed, if he had not to some extent learnt humbly to borrow foreign treasure, to warm himself at others' fires and to reinforce his vision by the glasses of art."

Particular thanks go out to Cesare Foligno, of Oxford University, for kindly sympathy and fortitude in reading the manuscript, and to Edgar Riley, Ph.D., of Lehigh University, who wrestled piously with a system of punctuation hitherto unsuspected.

To place the responsibility for the inevitable errors of fact or judgment upon any but the author would be charitable but unjust, so

"Forgive, good reader, all that here is wrong.
Rough is the music of the cricket's song,
And nestlings, when they fly, must face a fall."

— ECKHART (c. 900-970)

THE ASHES,
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.
April, 1932.

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MEDIEVAL EUROPE

CHAPTER I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

*Boundaries
of the Roman
Empire*

AT THE opening of the fourth century of the Christian era the Roman Empire sprawled like a gigantic octopus over the Western world. To the west it reached the shores of the Atlantic, passed over Gaul, and penetrated Britain as far as the river Tyne and the Solway Firth. The northern boundary was roughly determined by the Rhine and the Danube, whose headwaters were joined by a barrier of masonry sufficiently effective to be known to barbarian tribes as the Devil's Wall. But Roman influence penetrated beyond these rivers, and modern research has indicated the presence of Roman traders far in advance of the more formal frontier. To the east the Empire included Greece, Macedonia, and Thrace, crossed the Dardanelles, swept along the whole south coast of the Black Sea, took in Asia Minor, and, occupying Syria and Palestine, pushed out a narrow tentacle which covered about one-half of the Asiatic littoral of the Red Sea. In the south, Roman authority was recognized throughout the entire extent of North Africa, and the Mediterranean had become a Roman lake.

This vast expanse of territory with all of its suggested strength and power was by no means so formidable as it appeared. There were dangerous, perhaps fatal, weaknesses in the massive structure, for the Empire which Constantine had made Christian was in many respects, other than territorial, unlike the one which Augustus had created. For nearly three centuries Roman institutions had been undergoing definite transformation, a process which had been accelerated by the social revolution of the third century. The Romans who had built up the Republic and the Empire had followed no uniform system of colonial administration, unless we choose to regard opportunism as a system. The treatment which each new acquisition of territory received had depended largely upon the manner in which it had been acquired, whether by conquest, supplication, or treaty, upon the character and culture of its inhabitants, its political development, or its economic worth. The natural result of this casual policy had been the existence of infinite grada-

tions of local privilege and local taxation, and varying degrees of political liberty.

By the fourth century this situation had passed away. In the first place, the period of conquest had come to an end. The government, perhaps convinced that there was only one way to protect the civil power from the assaults of the army (a condition which had become chronic in the third century), had definitely adopted a policy of rigid centralization, which reached its climax in the "unveiled despotism of Diocletian." As Caracalla had produced a political uniformity by granting Roman citizenship to all freemen in the Empire, so now all provinces were treated alike and subjected to a uniform administration. The great provinces became imperial and even lost their old identity, much as did the French *pays* in the eighteenth century under the unimaginative reformers of the Revolution. Gaul ceased to be a province and became one of the four prefectures into which the Empire was somewhat illogically divided. The prefectures, nominally ruled by prefects, were Gaul (which included Britain and Spain as well as France), Italy (including Africa and Pannonia), Illyricum, and the East. These four major sections were further divided into dioceses, each under the control of a vicar, and the diocese in turn was subdivided into provinces, governed by rectors. While geographically the Empire seemed to be thus separated into groups in a chain of descending importance, there was no corresponding subordination of officials; that is to say, the rector was not in strict subordination to the vicar, nor he to the prefect. The Emperor could cut straight through the chain and intervene directly at any point, while each official could communicate directly with the central government.

This territorial uniformity was consistent with the general trend towards unification in other governmental functions. The old concept of a balance of power between the *princeps* and the Senate, which Augustus had held before the eyes of the Romans, had never been carried out. Indeed, the court lawyers had succeeded in replacing it by a legal fable according to which the Roman people had voluntarily entrusted all powers of government to the Emperor, who thus "stood forth to the Roman world as the single center and source of power and political action."¹ The extent of his authority may be illustrated from his titles. As *princeps Senatus* he was the acting head of the Senate, as *imperator* he commanded the military

Efforts at centralization

Territorial and administrative divisions

The position of the Emperor

¹ Bryce, J., *Holy Roman Empire*, ch. I.

and naval forces, as *tribunus* he was the representative of the people, as *proconsul* he governed the provinces, as *pontifex maximus* he administered the auguries and directed the religious life of his subjects; while as a result of the theories of the legists and the lack of an imperial budget he became the "Fountain of Justice" and the head of the financial system. He stood above the law and could not be impleaded by any person or class, and the revenues were regarded as his private property.

The whole financial system of the later Empire bears a rough analogy to that of France in the reign of Louis XVI. There had never been a budget, and in consequence the Empire had never experienced the consolation of a stable reserve. Expenses were very heavy; there were two courts to support, an army to maintain, barbarian tribes to subsidize or pacify with tribute, vast numbers of unemployed in the cities to be fed, clothed, and amused at the public cost, and a veritable army of officials to salary. If emergencies arose, the difficulties were met by special taxation. The bulk of the revenue was derived from the *tributum*, a tax levied upon land which was classified as arable, vineyard, or orchard, the amount assessed depending upon production. The unit of assessment was the *iugum*, generally understood to represent the amount of land which one *caput* (person) could cultivate. It followed that "*caput* and *iugum*, from the point of view of revenue, became convertible terms."² This tax, in consequence of the great debasement of the coinage, was generally paid in kind and stored in the government granaries.

Not only was the land taxed but the living things which subsisted upon it as well. Each man, whether free or slave, was subject to a capitation tax; women were rated as half-persons, while a certain number of cattle would constitute an artificial *iugum*. In addition, men might be called upon to render special service such as to maintain and repair roads and bridges, to assist in transport or the imperial post, and to lodge and entertain traveling officials.

In the cities men paid the *chrysargyrum*, a tax on trade, while certain occupations, especially those connected with transport and distribution, were regimented into the government service. There were customs duties at the ports, transport dues at the frontiers, and an *octroi* was collected at the town-limits. There were gifts(?) from the senators (the *aurum oblatitum*) and from the *decurions*

² Cambridge Medieval History, I, p. 41.

(the *aurum coronarium*), there were profits from the government monopolies and fines paid to the courts of justice.

Although these taxes were substantially uniform throughout the Empire and were regularly imposed, there was no uniformity in the amounts collected, which varied from year to year in accordance with imperial needs, the sum required being embodied in an annual statement or *indictio*. This chance arrangement made it impossible for the taxpayer to know in advance the extent of his obligation.

Tax Collection

The method of collecting the taxes was more burdensome than the weight of the taxes themselves and was characterized by extortion, corruption, and favoritism. The term "collection" is a generous one, for, properly speaking, the taxes were "farmed out"; that is, certain individuals or groups of individuals were made personally responsible for definite sums of money or their equivalent in kind, which they obtained by assessing the taxes and collecting them from their fellow citizens. Such a system readily lent itself to abuse; the inability or refusal of one man to pay his taxes put an increased burden upon the more timid, and there was an easy temptation for the tax-gatherer, in self-defense, to collect more than his quota. The groups primarily responsible for collection were the city magistrates, the *decurions*, or *decemprimi*, of the municipalities chosen from the class of *curiales* in which all who possessed twenty-five or more *iugera* of land were compulsorily enrolled. The imperial requirements for the year having been determined, the total amount was partitioned among the prefectures, dioceses, and provinces with the *civitas* (an area of varying size containing an urban center of government and bearing a rough analogy to the New England township) as the unit of collection. The *decurions* were given their quota and were required to remit the full amount to the *censitor* who represented the imperial government. The task was neither easy nor pleasant; many men were unable to pay, while others, supported by their tenants or their slaves, drove the harassed collector from their estates. Grants of immunity from taxation to favored classes of individuals—soldiers, certain officials of high rank, and later, when the Empire became Christian, officiating churchmen—added to the general burden. In the fifth century a Christian bishop wrote: "It is not the harvests but the public authorities that make the seasons good or bad."

The accomplishment of imperial uniformity and absolutism natu-

rally resulted in the growth of a bureaucracy and in the crystallization of society into castes. Such an army of officials was required to administer this centralized government with its ramifications into every corner of the Empire that Bishop Lactantius complained that "more collected than paid." Imperial officials could not be chosen from the *curiales* of the cities, for they had their own task of municipal administration and tax collection to keep them busy, nor from the soldiers, artisans, merchants, or shipowners. There were left only the independent freemen or the families of the officials themselves; and as this last was the most easy and natural source of recruitment, public offices became hereditary and an official caste was created.

If the son of an imperial official might look forward with comforting certainty to succeeding his father in public office, the son of a *curialis*, artisan, merchant, shipowner, tenant-farmer, or agricultural laborer was faced with the necessity of ignoring every stimulus of ambition and of resigning himself to the prospect of doing only what his father was doing—that, and nothing more. The reason for this state of things is fairly obvious. The *curiales*, who formed a quasi-administrative class, provided a convenient agency for tax collection, but it was soon made apparent that the *curiales* sought to avoid this function, since more often than not they were obliged to make up deficient tax returns from their own fortunes and their position became a liability from which they struggled to escape. The imperial government was faced with the alternative of devising new machinery or of compelling families of curial rank to remain such whether they would or no. It chose the latter; heavy penalties were inflicted upon the despondent *curialis* who sought to abandon his position, and the *curia* became a prison, sometimes in a very literal sense, for the soldier who chopped off a finger to evade further service was sentenced to a life imprisonment in the *curia*. Two avenues of escape, however, were open to the *curialis*: he might acquire sufficient property or wealth (which was highly improbable) to purchase admission into the senatorial ranks; or, should he become the father of thirteen children, a grateful and sympathetic government would consider his services to the State to be sufficiently evident to warrant his release. Otherwise the situation was hopeless and the son must succeed to the bondage from which the father had been unable to escape. If there were no sons, the government protected itself against a possible loss of security

for the municipal quota by placing strict limitations upon bequests by *curiales* to persons living outside the limits of the *civitas*, generally exacting a fine equivalent to one-fourth of the bequest.

As the government treated the *curia*, so it also controlled the activities of those engaged in trade and commerce. Men had formed societies (*collegia, scolæ*) for fellowship or economic improvement, but the government saw in these only more convenient agencies for assisting the administration of the Empire. They were utilized by the State which saw to it that the son of a guildsman entered his father's guild and assumed his share of the burden. The watermen, grain dealers, bakers, victuallers, indeed all economic groups connected with transportation and distribution, were compelled by the State to place their organizations at its disposal, while still other bodies were drafted for public works. In the government factories the workers were branded to minimize the chances of successful flight.

The dragooning of men into classes or professions did not restrict itself to the cities but extended into the country. It has already been pointed out that the Empire was divided into prefectures, dioceses, and provinces, but these were artificial and arbitrary divisions. Within the provinces, particularly in Gaul, were to be found one or more *civitates*. The *civitas* was a unit at once economic and administrative, and of such long standing that it might almost be regarded as a "natural" institution. The word connotes far more than a mere municipal area, for the *civitas* included not only the city itself but the country for miles around and is comparable to, if not identical with, the Germanic canton or Gau (*pagus*). Scattered throughout the *civitas* were many *villæ*, the fundamental agrarian unit. Again a word is confusing, for a *villa* was more than a country-house. It was a vast estate and included the private dwelling of the owner, the shops and buildings which the activity of the place demanded, the huts or prison of the slaves, the cottages of the dependents, and the expanse of arable land, meadow, and woodland. Part of this land was reserved for the personal use of the proprietor while the remainder was cultivated by smaller freeholders, free tenants, or *coloni*, which last possessed a somewhat uncertain status between personal freedom and legal attachment to the land. On the tax-register, because of the easy interchange of *caput* and *iugum* the *colonus* was described with the soil ("written on the land"—*adscriptus glebi*). He could not be sold apart from the land, nor

Civitas

Villa

The colonus

could the land be transferred without including him. On the other hand, he could not leave his farm voluntarily without the risk of being reduced to slavery. By the fourth century he had ceased to be a free tenant, and while he could implead his master in cases of superexaction of rents or services and in criminal cases, he could not so implead in other civil suits.

The *colonus* is one of the most elusive figures in history, and volumes have been written to account for his origin. The imperial government had settled whole tribes of barbarians (as *Laeti*) within the Empire, giving them land in return for military service in defense of the frontier; and this may have suggested imitation to landed proprietors anxious to attract colonists to areas yet uncultivated. There were analogies to be found in Eastern land customs. Economic pressure also played its part in the creation of this new class of agriculturalists. The proprietor eager to increase his holdings would employ persuasion or pressure to buy out the small freeholder, or in the event of a series of bad harvests following drought or the destructiveness of hail or frost would act as patron to the unfortunate farmer, taking over the title to the property as security but allowing the protected one to remain on his former holding. The operations of the land tax would tend to make the *colonate* a permanent status, for as the *colonus* was tied to the soil so, as a matter of course, were his children, and to prevent the loss of potential cultivators, the *colonus* must obtain permission if he desired to marry someone from outside the estate. His ability to contract a legal marriage and the fact that he was granted a personality at law marked him off from the slave, who was still regarded as a chattel.

To think of Rome is to think of legions and centurions and all the panoply of war, but Caesar would scarcely have recognized the forces that defended the Empire in the fourth century. The citizen was, in theory, still liable for military service, but very few were ever called upon for active campaigning. In fact, the government recognized a welcome source of revenue in the *aurum tironicum* by which one could compound for military service. Diocletian had improved the military organization by the creation of a field army, the strength of which has been perhaps overestimated at 150,000 infantry and 46,000 cavalry. In addition to this mobile force, which was generally stationed in the interior of the Empire ready for service on any threatened frontier, there was an even larger border force of perhaps 250,000 foot and 100,000 horse. These frontier forces were largely

*The
military
defenses*

recruited from the barbarian tribes whom it was their duty to hold in check, and their loyalty was not always above suspicion. The cavalry, whether on the frontier or near the capitals, was a barbarian monopoly; outlanders penetrated even into the highest ranks, and the imperial guard was as German as it was Roman.

These vast changes in imperial institutions were not without effect upon Roman society. "Corruption and inefficiency is the fate of all bureaucracies which are not checked by wide powers of self-government invested in the people."³ The Roman system was corrupt and inefficient. No better proof of this is needed than the continued creation of officials; from the official spies, the *agentes in rebus* of Diocletian, to the *defensor civitatis* of Valentinian I, whose task it was to protect the oppressed from the extralegal exactions of officials or the watchers of those officials. "Who is to watch the watchers?" was a question to which the imperial government found no satisfactory answer. Irregular and extraordinary taxes depressed agriculture and trade, while the method of collection increased the distress and transformed inclusion into the *curia* from a coveted honor into a penalty. The forced maintenance of a guild, or of a *collegium*, divided society into castes rather than classes, and created a nation of hereditary soldiers, officials, farmers, artisans, merchants, and traders. "The Roman Empire of the late third and fourth century was based on ignorance, on compulsion and violence, on slavery and servility, on bribery and dishonesty."⁴ There was an artificial etiquette in the imperial court similar to that found in the court of Louis XIV of France; there was inequality in the courts of law and favoritism in fines and punishments. All officials could not have been as bad as the magistrate Serenatus, who "peopled the woods with fugitives and the villas with barbarians, the altars with criminals, and the prisons with priests." Nevertheless, the greed, injustice, and veniality of magistrates, judges, and other officials were so well known that they had become proverbial.

But there were elements of strength as well as of weakness. After all, the Empire withstood the barbarian assaults for centuries, although there is reason to suspect that this success must in part be attributed to the relatively small size of the military forces of the individual tribes, and to the fact that a coöperative attack upon Rome was beyond barbarian strategy. The Emperor, with his omni-

³ Rostovtzeff, M., *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, p. 460.

⁴ *Ibid.*

present influence and his absolute authority, symbolized the unity of the territories he controlled. The very name of Rome was heard everywhere with pride and reverence, and the granting of Roman citizenship to all freemen in the Empire gave each man, however humble, the right to feel that he had a personal interest in this great organization. There was the concept of universal brotherhood which Stoic philosophy had spread among the educated classes and which Christianity was teaching to the poor. There was the artificial, but not the less effective, unity created by the network of arterial roads which, with somewhat of the old Roman stubbornness, went straight to their goal nor turned aside for river or for mountain. There was unity in the system of weights and measures, in the coinage, in the *pax romana*, in the Latin tongue, in the education given at the rhetorical schools and universities which reached from Bordeaux to Beirut, and in that greatest of all Roman institutions, the Roman law.

But the Empire declined, and the problem of its decay has produced as many attempted solutions as the equally elusive problem of its rise to greatness. It seems impossible to give any single explanation for the decline, because there was a general deterioration which affected all parts of this gigantic organism, and it is often difficult to distinguish between a cause, a symptom, and a result. With these limitations in mind, some general factors which accompanied the last centuries of the Empire may be mentioned. The Empire, despite its vast size, was made up of many peoples, some of whom retained an active sense of linguistic, religious, or racial differences; and the civilizations which had once flowered so brilliantly were now in obvious decay. Again, the Empire had not only crystallized into castes, but its very vitality had become sluggish under the influence of formalism and the routine of an almost Oriental despotism. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the *civitates* which, deprived of the stimulus of a quasi-independence and the pride which comes of active participation in government, now reflected the gloomy submission of the *curia*. Roman trade, instead of being a sound exchange of economic products, had always resembled a conveyancing of plunder, an activity which had naturally suffered when further conquests ceased and exploitation had exhausted the first fruits. The governmental interference, already suggested, in the two spheres of production and distribution gave little encouragement to the overseas trader or to the man who catered for a local market.

Suggested
reasons for the
decline of the
Empire

Trade
restrictions

Industrial and commercial wealth declined, and the vicious circle was completed by increased regulations.

In the country the proprietors were accumulating wide estates, but at the cost of a disappearing class of free farmers and a rapid growth of the *colonate*. Art and literature betrayed an equal lack of originality and either contented themselves with imitating the work of the classical period or evidenced an indisputable inferiority whenever they attempted to break away from conventionalized forms. The triumphal Arch of Constantine has rightly been called "the gravestone of the art of Greece and Rome." Slavery made its contribution, not only in lowering the general standards of society by dulling the senses to human suffering and degradation, by the introduction of the coarseness of the North and the luxurious immorality of the East, but also (as in the United States a century ago) by furthering the creation of a class of poor whites unable to compete with it in the labor market. The ruinous system of taxation cannot be overlooked, nor can the literal barbarization of the Empire by the systematic importation of Germans, Goths, Vandals, or Franks to serve as soldiers, *coloni*, slaves, servants, or laborers.

Depopulation There were plagues and a noticeable decline in population, but depopulation may as well be a result as a cause. Yet wealthy Romans stood more and more aloof from marriage and looked upon large families with disfavor, while the Christian regard for celibacy, or at least chastity, and its disapproval of second marriages had much the same effect upon the increasing number of converts from the lower classes.

Christianity Christianity has always been ranked among the major causes of the decline, and at least two great writers of the early Church, Tertullian and Augustine, felt called upon to defend the new religion from this charge. There were reasons for such an accusation. The emperors had anticipated eternal glory by assuming the title of divinity, a claim which no sincere Christian could admit, but the denial of which, before the Empire became Christianized, might easily be interpreted as treason. Public festivals, games, and celebrations, or the industries inevitably connected with them, service in the army or in the civil bureaus of the State, might at myriad points require a participation in a pagan ritual or an expression of adherence to a pagan cult to which Christians could give but a hypocritical compliance. From the point of view of the government, the Christians could reasonably be regarded as bad citizens, if indeed

they could be called citizens at all, and they had become dangerously numerous since the beginning of the third century.

The Empire of the fourth century was not a desirable place in which to live; old institutions had passed away while the new battened upon the people and thrived at the expense of individual freedom and enterprise. Over against the picture of the cultured senators leading the pleasant life of dilettantes on their picturesque villas must be placed the darker spectacle of the thousands who fled from home and friends, preferring slavery under the barbarians to the appearance of freedom under the Empire.

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CHAPTER II

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

The importance of the Christian triumph

CHRISTIANITY became a recognized religion (*religio licita*) in the generation following the reforms of Diocletian. To account for the amazing alteration in the fortunes of the Christians, an alteration which transformed them from a scorned and persecuted sect, a "third race," into the dominant religious group in Europe, is a task which is either extremely simple or equally complicated. To the zealous Christian of the fourth century, or to confirmed adherents of the Faith at any later time, the problem presented no difficulties. Once it was admitted or believed that Christianity was the *one* universal religion and that it was, by definition, of divine origin and authority, it would be as presumptuous as it would be futile to attempt an explanation for the successful realization of the Divine Will. It was divine and therefore it *was*, and there was nothing more to be said. But for him who is not so convinced, the answer must be sought with care. It is not a matter for indifference, for the triumph of Christianity is the outstanding event in European history. The effects of this victory are too vast and too far-reaching to admit of measurement or valuation. Not only were the lives of men for a thousand years shot through and through by Christian influences, but Christianity still affects every aspect of our own scientific or, perhaps more correctly, mechanistic age. Art and architecture, music, literature, and the drama, social and legal customs, college curricula, ceremonial processions, random phrases, and a thousand details of everyday existence betray the universal influence of the Christian triumph. The Christian missionary succeeded where the Roman general had failed, and the barbarians who captured the Empire were conquered by monk and priest. Rome ceased to be the home of the Caesars, but Rome became even greater as the home of the popes.

In the first three centuries after Christ, Christian enthusiasts, slowly and in face of persecutions, spread around the shores of the Mediterranean and established themselves in every important town. So long as they were few in numbers and restricted, in the main, to

the servile or laboring classes they attracted little attention or opposition. The famous persecution by Nero was a punishment for the alleged burning of Rome and not an attempt to crush a group for its religious beliefs. But when their numbers increased and the significance of the Christian tenets came to be realized, the sect aroused the hostility of the government, and persecution followed as a matter of course. The Roman government, as might be expected from the representative of a polytheistic people, was naturally tolerant to religious beliefs and had accepted the gods along with the inhabitants of conquered territory. No harm had resulted from this because the imported religions had in no way opposed imperial legislation on religious practice, but had, on the other hand, contributed actively to religious observance.

But Christianity was different. It not only said so but so conducted itself. The Christians insisted that theirs was the *only* true religion and refused to recognize as valid, or to have any thing to do with, any other religious association. This position was extremely logical, but it brought the Christians into an uncomfortable prominence. Here was one exclusive, intolerant group in the midst of a hundred sects living in apparent harmony. There were other more serious consequences. Roman public life found expression in numerous festivals and processions of a religious character in which the citizen was expected to take part. The Christian could not see his way clear to do this. Such an attitude was more than mere passive denial or exclusiveness. It implied the ineffectiveness or worthlessness of official religious observance, and it might easily be disobedience. To scorn the gods of Rome could be regarded as a public offense. Again, the acceptance of Christ as the *one* God precluded (without hypocrisy or apostasy) the Christian from participating in the adoration of the recognized gods including the Emperor himself. Disobedience, contumacy, treason — the case for punishment was growing. That there was an element of communism in Christianity is perhaps debatable, but it could not have been enough to be disturbing. To make a bad matter worse, there were among the Christians a large number of "conscientious objectors" who refrained from military service, from trades which in some way catered to religious observance, from the civil service, or from marriage. Christianity appeared less as a religious irritant than as a social and political menace. It was well enough for them to say: "We render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that

*The political
danger of
Christianity*

are God's." Who was to make that delicate distinction? It could hardly be left to the individual. The Roman government had never been faced with the relative claims of Church and State, but that perplexing problem, more difficult than any Sphinx's riddle, was beginning to present itself. The State could not tolerate the existence of an organization which protected itself from imperial control by a sort of religious insulation. The emperors became persecutors from a sense of duty to the State rather than from religious conviction; and the best and most tolerant of them all, Marcus Aurelius, was the most conscientious, if not the most violent, of their oppressors.

The persecutions

The persecution of the Christians was spasmodic. Short periods of violent oppression were followed by long intervals of immunity or sufferance. The persecutions varied greatly in intensity and to a considerable extent according to the character of the persecutor. Trajan (98-117), whom a Christian legend has allowed to enter Heaven, warned his officials that the Christians were not to be sought out and were to be pardoned if they would recant. His greatest objection to the Christians was that they *met*, for all clubs might be centers of political disaffection. In a letter to Pliny he suggested caution in acting upon the receipt of anonymous letters accusing men of belonging to the prohibited sect. His successor, Hadrian (117-138), being somewhat of a sceptic, insisted that charges against Christians be well founded and imposed heavy fines for false accusations. Antoninus Pius (138-161), who combined statesmanship with a serious view of religion, allowed the law to take its course. Marcus Aurelius (161-180) was an active persecutor from a sense of duty. But after Aurelius the Christians were little bothered until the middle of the third century when the Decian persecution (249-251) surpassed in extent, but not in severity, any that had gone before. The persecution was directed mainly against the clergy, while at the same time it tried to prevent the meetings of Christians. There were none of the spectacular tortures which characterized the earlier persecutions. This was followed by an attack by Valerian (253-260), and the movement of hostility reached its climax in the "last persecution" of Diocletian and Maximin (303-313). This persecution, for which Diocletian is held responsible, should more accurately be attributed to the Cæsar, Galerius, for Diocletian was tolerant by nature while both his wife and daughter were Christians. Galerius is said to have found an excuse in the rumor that the Christians at the palace were attempting to block his succession

to the imperial throne. Whatever the cause, it was the most severe of all and was a definite attempt to destroy Christianity, root and branch. The persecuting edict, issued in 303, forbade all Christians to meet for the purpose of worship, ordered their churches to be destroyed, their books to be surrendered, and Christian officials to be deprived of their positions. This edict is interesting, for it reveals not only the seriousness of the government but the seriousness of the situation, and explains in itself why the persecutions failed. The Christians were too many, too strong, and too widespread. In 311 Galerius abandoned his policy of persecution and revoked the edict of 303. It may have been that Constantine and Licinius were hoping to make a virtue of necessity when they issued their edict of toleration at Milan in 313. The persecutions were at an end.

They had failed because the policy of persecution had not been regularly or universally applied, and "because the persecutors were less in earnest about it than the persecuted, and had other interests." In the general political chaos of the third century (from 180 to 283 there were thirty-five emperors and twenty-four changes of government) the Christian problem could receive little attention. After each shock of violence the Church survived, sometimes badly shattered, and in the intervals of calm not only recovered her earlier strength but increased in membership and prestige. Each succeeding persecution found more Christians than before to persecute, until the State admitted the hopelessness of the struggle.

What was there in Christianity which gave it this tremendous vitality and recuperative power? We are back again to the original question but must attempt the more difficult approach to the solution. To begin with, there were many elements in the Roman Empire which proved favorable to Christianity. Christianity came late into the religious experience of Rome and found the ground well prepared. The Romans were naturally a religious people. A Greek historian had already remarked in the second century before the Christian era that "a scrupulous fear of the gods is the very thing which keeps the Roman commonwealth together." Two centuries of military success and increasing economic comfort had brought decay into the old spontaneous worship of the gods, so that it had become mechanical or, if it remained, had localized itself with the *lares et penates* of the home or the myriad deities of the fields.

But this decay was, like all periods of decay, only a transition.

Failure of the persecutions

The strength of Christianity

Oriental factors
The official religion gave way, indeed, but to new religious stimuli from Greece or from the Orient. The religiosity of the Roman was to be offered such an assortment of beliefs that the difficulty would be in the choosing. The great factors which made for imperial unity — the *pax romana*, the roads, the Mediterranean, the Roman language to be found everywhere and the Greek tongue to be heard in every seaport town, the chain of schools, the safety from pirates at sea, and the protection of the law on land — facilitated travel and the interchange of goods and gods.

The later religions of Rome came from the East; the deities of Greece, of Egypt, of Persia, of Asia Minor, and of Syria found shelter in the Pantheon at Rome. In every town, in every school were devotees, proselytes, priests, and priestesses of the unnumbered cults of the Orient. While each had its own particular attraction, few appealed to more than a limited class and none attracted all. Some offered the allurement of a gross and sensual ritual; others relied upon the effects of ecstatic frenzy or the exaltation which comes from a mystical communion with the Infinite. Others were more sober, dignified, and altogether of a nobler type. The worship of Cybele (the Great Mother) and of Mithra exerted a wide attraction not undeserved.

Stoicism
These cults were already old when they entered the Empire, and they brought with them a matured ceremonial and a solemn ritual performed by robed priests. They had their temples and their altars, their candles and incense, their hymns and chants and prayers. They advocated a moral standard of life which bordered on asceticism, maintained by discipline and encouraged by the hope of reward or the fear of torment which awaited the individual in the immortality beyond the tomb. Indeed, Mithraism, which because of its emphasis upon discipline appealed especially to the military, far outstripped Christianity in obtaining converts and as late as the third century seemed certain to dominate the Empire. Noblest of all the elements of appeal was Stoicism. Stoicism was the deification of the human reason, the triumph of mind over matter, the conviction that man could rise above adversity by means of his intellect, could raise himself, so to say, by his mental boot straps. By its doctrine of "Save yourself through yourself," it gave tremendous dignity to the individual. It has been well said that the paganism of the fourth century was "a marvellous mixture of philosophy and religion, not without grandeur and nobility of thought, feeling

keenly the unity of Nature, the essential kinship of man with the Divine, and knowing something of the yearning in man's heart for redemption and for communion with God.”¹

But against all these rivals the Church won ground. Her victory was due in part to the incompleteness of other cults and in part to her own positive advantages. No rival could appeal to all types of men, Stoicism, with its constant demand upon reason and the intellect, least of all. But Christianity claimed the whole life of man, that men “might have life and have it *more abundantly*.” The fatherhood (and motherhood) of God, the brotherhood of man, immortality, a “last judgment,” were all to be found in paganism, but there was a philosophical or mystical vagueness about them which Judaized Christianity did not possess. The desire for personal immortality creates the demand for a personal God, not a transcendental infinity. Christianity offered the most personal of all gods, not an anthropomorphic majesty to be viewed with awe, but a God to love for His humanity and to fear for His justice, a “very man” and a “very God.” As Justin Martyr admitted:—“I put myself in the hands of a Stoic and I stayed a long time with him, but when I got no further in the matter of God, for he did not know himself and used to say this knowledge was not necessary, I left him.” The ultimate success of Christianity perhaps depended upon the fact that the center of the new religion was “not an idea, nor a ritual, but a personality.”²

There were other contributory factors. The ethical or moral sense is deeply rooted in mankind, and man readily responds to reminders of his own shortcomings and sins if provision can be found for their expiation. The failure of Stoicism to create a sense of sin and the uncertainty of the expiatory measures of the Oriental religions gave Christianity a marked advantage. Again, the persecutions perhaps accounted for as many converts as victims. The martyrs were convinced that they possessed something worth dying for, and conviction is contagious. The calm heroism with which Ignatius, Polycarp, Blandina, and Perpetua met, even welcomed, the most terrible of deaths could not fail to impress the beholders or those to whom the stories were retold. But too much stress

The Christian appeal

The blood of the martyrs, the seed of the Church

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, I, p. 95.

² Glover, T. R., *The Conflict of Religions*, p. 116. The author is heavily indebted to this book for many of the ideas expressed in this section of the present chapter.

must not be laid upon the often quoted statement that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." After the first persecutions the steadfastness of the Christians gave way to caution; and the number of those who denied the Faith or purchased the official "certificate of denial" from complacent or sympathetic officials, or who fled from the persecutors, increased with every wave of oppression, the example being set by St Cyprian.

Then, too, there were the economic and the social sides. Men engaged in industry or trade lived in a dreary present and looked out into a dismal future. The doctrine of material charity and assisting brotherhood appealed to those whose lives had been unhappy; and the assurance of an ultimate felicity gave consolation to those whose hopes of earthly comfort had been in vain. Much as the doctrine that there is glorious compensation in the hereafter for the oppressed of this world won wide acceptance among the poor of industrial England, so must Christianity have appealed to the downtrodden and neglected of imperial Rome. Relatively speaking, the poor had hopes of greater happiness than the rich. Stoicism had appealed to the dignity of man, but at the same time it tended to cut him off from society. Christianity not only asserted the dignity and equality of men before the throne of God, but the economic justice in the doctrine that the laborer was worthy of his hire made a potent appeal.

For these, in addition to the innumerable personal reasons which impel men to conversion in all ages, the Church had steadily grown and was strong enough to survive the vigorous efforts of Diocletian. She had not only acquired a large membership, but since the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235) she had built her own churches and had created a uniformity of organization not possessed by any other religion, a uniformity which gave her an internal cohesion too strong for the success of heresy and which enabled her to consolidate resistance against attack from without.

The organization of the Church in the first century was loose and lacked uniformity. From the *Acts of the Apostles* it is evident that while the church at Jerusalem possessed considerable organization that at Corinth had little or none. The familiar system which persisted throughout the Middle Ages and still obtains in the Roman Catholic Church was of slow growth. This system (partly reflected in the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Church of England) consists of a definite ecclesiastical hierarchy with a bishop at the

head of a diocese, assisted in spiritual matters by priests and in administrative functions by deacons. In the earliest, the so-called Apostolic age, the apostles, as having received a direct charge from Christ, were the natural leaders of Christians everywhere. Beneath them in importance came the prophets and teachers who had no fixed territory but wandered through the provinces evangelizing and establishing Christian communities. Within these "foundations" the control was in the hands of bishops, presbyters, and elders, between whom it seems impossible to make any distinction. The bishops or presbyters were aided by the subordinate deacons and deaconesses, for women were certainly allowed to share in the administration of the early Christian communities.

But by the end of the second century a change of first importance had occurred. Presbyter and bishop were no longer synonymous terms. Each church now had one presiding officer, the bishop, while the presbyters stood below him in rank. The exaltation of the bishop and his distinction from the presbyter is the key to the development of the organization of the Church.

The preëminence of one individual in the Christian community was, perhaps, inevitable. The early Christians placed considerable emphasis upon outward charity to their indigent brethren, to the widow and orphan, the sick and the poor. Jerome says that the church at Rome, about the middle of the second century, was administering relief to fifteen hundred widows and orphans. An organized charity of this kind required the maintenance of funds for which it was well to hold one person responsible. Such an officer (curiously enough with the title of *episcopus*, i.e., bishop) could be found in the treasurer of pagan temples or in the presiding officer of the lay "clubs" of the Empire. The instruction of the *catechumens*, or candidates for baptism, needed to be supervised in the interests of uniformity, and this again made the concentration of authority desirable. The same would be true in the attempt to maintain discipline within the clergy or to adjudicate disputes and quarrels among the lay members. The ceremony of worship required one individual as a presiding officiant. In the days of persecution, when the Church was attacked from without and when heresy threatened to disintegrate it from within, it was obvious that the Christians in each community would look to some one of their number for consolation, advice as to obedience to the Empire, or instruction as to the true tenets of their Faith. So for the pur-

*The emergence
of the bishop*

poses of administration, of instruction, of discipline, and of worship it was natural that one of the clergy should assume a general charge and acquire a special rank. The fact that the individual communities were small would make it unnecessary to have a separate head for each functional division.

By the year 180 every church was ruled by a single bishop, the number of presbyters and deacons still remaining variable. This crystallization of the *local* organization aided greatly in strengthening the *general* power of the Church, which in time became a macrocosm of the myriad and similar churches throughout the Empire. Facility of travel encouraged intercommunication among the churches, and in many areas the representatives (usually the bishops) of individual churches came together in "synods" or councils to discuss general policy or to establish rules for daily conduct or religious belief. All in all, by the time Constantine issued his Edict of Toleration the Church possessed an organization and a cohesion which rivaled and in some respects surpassed that of the imperial government.

The part which Constantine played in the triumph of Christianity has been so embellished by legend that the facts are hard to discover. The story runs that Constantine, on his way to battle with his rival, Maxentius, for the possession of the western portion of the Empire, was favored (along with his army) with a vision of a cross in the sky. In the night which followed he was informed, in a dream, that the sign he had seen in the Heavens was the symbol of victory. His subsequent triumph at the battle of the Mulvian Bridge convinced him, and, being converted, he promulgated the decree which legalized the Christian Faith. The facts appear to be otherwise. Constantine wavered for many years before he made his personal choice between paganism and Christianity, though it should be mentioned that his father had treated Christians with a friendly tolerance. If Constantine built the church of *Hagia Eirene* in Constantinople, he also built a temple to *Pax* in Rome; his coins are neutralized by the stamp of the Christian monogram and the figure of Apollo. It was only in the year of his death (337), twenty-four years after the miracle of the Mulvian Bridge, that he put off the purple robes of Empire to accept the white garment of the *catechumen*, saying; "Let there be no ambiguity now." In that long interval his policy was one of official neutrality and personal favor. Constantine needed no miracle to convince him that his best support would come from

Synods

Constantine

The Mulvian Bridge

His conversion

the middle classes and the proletariat, and these were now heavily Christian. If the Christians were outnumbered, they more than made up for it with the internal strength which comes from organization. The edict was the work of a statesman, not a convert.

But, however issued, it was a turning point in the history of Christianity. The immediate effect upon the Church was twofold. Now that Christianity had become legitimate and was known to stand in favor with the Emperor, the Church was in danger of being deluged with converts. Christianity, which had previously been a sign of social ostracism and a barrier to official advancement, now became a recommendation and a guarantee of character. But success had its other side as well. The rich and the curious, the ambitious and the covetous, "with unspeakable hypocrisy" sought membership in the favored band. When Constantine exempted the clergy from the hated burdens of the *curia*, there was such an ungodly rush for Holy Orders and such a falling off in the imperial revenue that the Emperor was obliged to forbid men of curial rank to enter the clergy. If one may credit Jerome, the Church may well have looked with misgiving upon some of her enthusiastic clergymen:

"Their hair is curled and still shows traces of the tongs; their fingers glisten with rings; and if there is wet on the road they walk across on tiptoe so as not to splash their feet. When you see these gentry think of them rather as potential bridegrooms than as clergymen. Indeed, some of them devote their whole life and all their energies to finding out about the names, the households, and the characters of married ladies. I will give you a brief and summary portrait of the chief practitioner in this line, that from the master's likeness you may recognize his disciples. He rises with the sun in haste; the order of his morning calls is duly arranged; he takes short cuts, and importunately thrusts his old head almost into the bed-chambers of ladies still asleep. If he sees a cushion, or an elegant table-cover, or, indeed, any article of furniture that he fancies, he starts praising and admiring it and takes it in his hand, and so, lamenting that he has nothing like this, he begs or rather extorts it from the owner, as all the women are afraid to offend the town gossip."³

If Constantine had favored Christianity, it was because Christians were numerous and influential enough to be of service to the Empire. This meant, of course, that the Church must be united.

*The effect of
the edict of
Milan (313)*

*The Church
faces the
problems of
heresy*

³ Translated by Wright & Sinclair, in *A History of Later Latin Literature*, p. 55.

A divided organization would not only be of reduced positive value but might actually be a menace. Christianity in the opening decades of the fourth century was faced with the very serious danger of internal dissension. The doctrinal bases of the new religion were still only in the process of development, and the pressure of persecution had permitted variations of belief or procedure to spring up in local areas. Africa was a fertile breeding ground for such differences. Upon the matter of discipline the African church had been compelled to withstand the attacks of the Donatists, a controversy in which Constantine had first attempted to act as arbitrator and then as judge, but finally left the struggle to be decided by the combatants themselves. A more serious danger loomed up in the matter of Faith.

It was a recognized part of Christian belief that Christ was the Son of God and a God Himself. But there was a decided difference of opinion as to the relative positions of God the Father and God the Son. To the bulk of Christians the two were the same, equal in time, substance, and divinity. A powerful minority, however, headed by the Presbyter Arius, held that the Son was similar to, but not identical with, the Father, "that there was only one true God, the Father, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost were created beings." Arius had a large following and the attempts of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, to destroy this belief created such a disturbance that the Church was in peril of being divided into at least two hostile camps. Such a situation was highly prejudicial to the Empire, for not only was the united support of the Church endangered, but if the Emperor sided with either party he would find the other arrayed against him. He could neither ignore nor judge the issue.

In this dilemma Constantine urged the Church to send representatives to a General Council and decide the issue once and for all. The Council was held at Nicaea, in Bithynia, in 325. There the Church declared the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, which Gibbon explains as "pure and distinct equality tempered, on the one hand, by the internal connexion and spiritual penetration which indissolubly unites the Divine Persons, and, on the other, by the pre-eminence of the Father which was acknowledged as far as is compatible with the independence of the Son."⁴ The position of the Arians was discredited and they were obliged to abandon their tenets or face imperial persecution.

The unity of the Church was saved but the damage had been done.

Arianism

The Council
of Nicaea
(325)

⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxi.

Ulfilas, a Goth who had been brought up as a hostage in Asia Minor, had embraced Christianity under the influence of Arian teachers. He devoted his life to missionary work among the barbarians and was so far successful that Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians had embraced Christianity before they invaded the Empire. But they were Arians, and to the natural hostility between conqueror and conqueror was added the bitterness of religious disagreement. The Arian church was always a minority, was further weakened by a lack of organization, and was defeated at length by the Church of Rome.

Ulfilas and the Goths

By the end of the fourth century men were ordered to become Christians and the persecuted became the persecutors. It was a Christian Empire, united by an official Credo and a standard of orthodoxy, which the barbarians overwhelmed but only partially destroyed.

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CHAPTER III

THE BARBARIAN INFILTRATION

Rome and the barbarian world

THE Romans had much the same conception of barbarians as did the Greeks; that is to say, they included in that one category all those who lived beyond the formal frontiers of the Empire. In this sense, the term "barbarian" would embrace Ethiopians, Persians, Germans, Saracens, Celts, Libyans, Numidians, and Moors. But when one talks of the barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire, one instinctively (and correctly) thinks of the assaults against the defenses of the North made by the two great branches of the Germanic peoples, the Teutons and the Goths.

Rome had had long experience with the Germanic tribes. At the confluence of the Lech and the Wertach she had built the town of Augusta Vindelicorum (the modern Augsburg); and her merchants had, at an early date, established a market at Marbach on the river Neckar to exchange the luxuries of the South for the unromantic but economically valuable goose feathers, soap, hair, trousers, beets, slaves, furs, timber, cattle, hides, iron, and amber of the North.

The barbarian world in flux

The account which Tacitus has left us in his *Germania*, or Cæsar's first-hand story of his wars in Gaul, invaluable as they are, are probably not accurate pictures of the tribes which swept across the Roman frontiers in the fourth and fifth centuries and like a relentless flood inundated the provinces of the West. Centuries of tribal warfare, of wanderings which broke off old associations and led to the formation of new ones, to say nothing of the long contact with Rome, whether as traders, captives, hostages, *læti*, or as paid soldiers in the imperial army, must have changed profoundly the character of those German tribes in whose simple and manly virtues Tacitus could see an opportune rebuke to the degenerate effeminacy of Rome. The Germans of the fourth and fifth centuries were different. We hear no more of the Quadi and but rarely of the Marcomanni. New names appear representing amalgamations or associated groups rather than individual tribes, which fact alone shows that changes of importance had been made.

The barbarians had followed their flocks and herds, constantly

impelled to advance by the pressure of other tribes behind until Roman garrisons and river patrols stood as barriers to further progress. To south and west had been the only desirable, perhaps the only possible, lines of march and these were blocked. As tribe after tribe pushed slowly into already occupied areas from which there was no escape, they were thrown, so to say, into a great alembic of war in which some tribes disappeared and others survived only as associated members of confederations.

Far to the north and beyond the river Elbe dwelt the Angles, whose future was to lie in Britain. South and west of the Angles, inhabiting the region between the Rhine and the Elbe and bordering upon the North Sea, was the formidable confederation, collectively known as Saxons, but which included other tribes, e.g., the Frisians. To the south of these were the Thuringians; to the west, occupying the right bank of the Rhine as far south as the river Main, were the Franks, a confederation which was to have a most decisive effect upon the future history of Europe. South of these again, in the angle formed by the headwaters of the Rhine and the Danube, lived the Alemanni (whose very name, "All Men," indicates another agglomeration) and the Suevi. To the east ranged Burgundians, Lombards, Rugii, Scirii, and Heruli, which last tribe showed an æsthetic sympathy with the Picts of Scotland by painting themselves blue.

While the Teutonic branch crowded thus upon the river frontiers of the Rhine and the upper Danube, their Gothic cousins to the east were pressing southward toward the lower Danube and the Black Sea. The Goths had long since left their homelands in Scandinavia or along the Baltic, and many generations had passed before they reached the Roman frontier in any numbers. During this migratory period the Gothic peoples had split into two ill-defined groups, the one moving to the southwest to be known as the *Visi* or West Goths, and the other as the *Ostro* or East Goths, the river Dniester forming a rough boundary line between them. Behind them in their wanderings came the Gepidæ, while with them, perhaps as allies, were Jutes and Vandals.

If the Roman trader and merchant had long been acquainted with Teuton and Goth, the Roman soldier had had his introduction to these blonde barbarians as well. Never since the memorable invasion of the Teutons and the Cimbri in 113 B.C. had the frontiers been safe from attack. There were many reasons why the barbarians

*The location
of the
barbarians*

Teutons

Goths

*The long
conflict with
Rome*

should seek to cross the rivers which held them in check. It seems certain that the river lands of the Rhine and the Danube became heavily populated by the fourth century. The primitive system of agriculture (in which rotation of crops was obtained by the simple method of allowing a piece of land to lie fallow in alternate years) demanded extensive territory and created a land hunger. As farmers the barbarians could envy the rich lands of Italy or Gaul; as fighters they could hope for the thrill of the day of battle and the share of the warrior's spoil; as men there was the powerful fascination of coming into contact with a civilization which they could admire but not understand, and of seeing for themselves the splendor, the wealth, and all the "grandeur that was Rome."

For five centuries Vandals, Alemanni, and Goths had hurled themselves at the Rhine or the Danube; but while Vandals had reached the walls of Aquileia (169 A.D.), Alemanni had seen Milan (213), and Franks had swept over Gaul and Spain to the shores of Africa (259), no assault had more than a temporary success, if we except the surrender of the lands north of the Danube by the Emperor Commodus and the occupation of the *Agri Decumates* (north of Switzerland and between the headwaters of the Rhine and the Danube) by the Alemanni at the opening of the third century. It might well be argued that this last was of permanent gain to the barbarians, for it greatly facilitated any invasion of Italy. It was not until the fourth century that the western portion of the Empire collapsed before the barbarian onslaught. The final success was so rapid that it bewilders the modern reader much as it must have astounded the contemporary Roman.

Perhaps the sense of suddenness can be somewhat reduced by recalling the fact that thousands of barbarians had already entered the Empire by peaceful penetration. All along the Rhine and the Danube were tribes (within the confines of the Empire) who held imperial lands as *laeti* or *foederati*. Countless numbers of individuals served not only in the army but in the chancery; not only as servants, butlers, bakers, chairmen, but also as city magistrates or local (and imperial) senators. So numerous were they that the Emperor Julian was unable to distinguish a Gaul from a German, and Theodosius forbade barbarians to wear their native costume lest by so doing they might *see* how many they were. Again, the Germanic tribes do not seem to have had any definite hostility toward Rome. The Empire was not strong, and Roman arms, even when wielded

by barbarians, were no longer regarded as invincible. When the assault came, it came not from the barbarian neighbors of Rome, nor as the result of deliberate preparation, but from as wild a source as anything that history records, and the motive was Fear!

Out of the East, where it had failed to build up a kingdom, a Ural-altaic race of mounted nomads appeared and, with a swiftness that was only equaled by its fury, swept over the Alani (who lived between the Don and the Volga) and fell upon the Ostrogoths. "The wind which stirred the Folk-waves into motion" was a strange people, known as the Huns, as terrifying in appearance as in attack. Indeed:

"The Northern Bear looks on no uglier crew,
Base is their garb, their bodies foul to view."

As late as the thirteenth century the legend persisted that the Goths had driven out the most hateful of their women and that these had associated with devils, from which association sprang the Huns. They were squat in stature and large headed with small, deep-set eyes; their faces were flat, their hair close cropped, with the exception of a small black beard on the chin; they were thick in the body with powerful chest and arms; they had short legs out of all proportion to the superstructure. They lived on horseback, and so well did they ride and so much of a piece did they seem with their horses, that all who saw them were reminded at once of Centaurs. Even in their food they did not get away from horses, for they subsisted largely on mare's milk and horseflesh, which they cooked(?) by placing it beneath the cloth that served as a saddle and relying upon the natural results of friction—a method to be recommended only by its simplicity. Personal courage was their one and (apparently) only virtue, at least before they came into contact with the gentler customs of Rome. Their fierceness was proverbial: "No grass grew where once the Hun had passed."

In the year 375 these wild people smashed the feeble resistance of the Ostrogoths, who fled to the West, into the lands of the Visigoths. One portion of the Visigoths, under Athanarich, elected to defend themselves and received defeat and slavery as the reward of their courage. The rest, under their Christian leader Fritigern, asked the Emperor Valens to grant them a refuge in the lands south of the Danube, i.e., within the protection of the Empire. Their request was granted and in 376 some 200,000 Goths crossed the river boundary. This act of Valens was not, in itself, unwise, and the Empire

The Huns

*The Goths
enter the
Empire
(375)*

might have received valuable defensive support from the grateful fugitives. But whatever advantages might have accrued were effectively lost through the insolence and rapacity of the Roman officials detailed to supervise the immigration. Food and necessities were supplied to the refugees at emergency prices. A reasonable condition of entry had been the surrender of war material, but official greed allowed many Goths to retain their arms by purchase. Petty insults and a thousand irritations, for which unsympathetic officials in all ages have shown a genius, added to the general indignation.

Resentment at this unexpected and dishonorable treatment flared into open hostility, and a punitive expedition by a Roman garrison was defeated near Marcianopolis in 377. Whatever may have been the excuse for this Gothic rebellion, it could not be overlooked by the Empire. Valens himself took command of the army which set out in the following year to reduce the refugees to obedience or servility. At Hadrianople the Roman and Gothic armies met, and, after a terrific conflict which lasted the entire day, the imperialists were defeated and the Emperor was left dead upon the field. The battle was decisive. The Goths swarmed over Thrace and Macedonia, ravaging "everything but the earth and sky," and even reached the walls of Constantinople. But lack of unity of purpose and of the power to hold together for any protracted period prevented them from taking full advantage of their victory. They disintegrated into comparatively small groups, and the Emperor Theodosius was able to handle them effectively enough to confine them in reservations where they became *foederati* and received an annual subsidy.

When Theodosius died in 395, the Empire which Constantine had reunited was split in two once more and this time forever. The two youthful sons of Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius, were made Emperors of the East and West respectively, Arcadius ruling at Constantinople while Honorius held his court at Ravenna. Since both boys were too young to administer their governments directly, the actual control was held by Rufinus (a barbarian from Aquitaine) and Stilicho (certainly a barbarian and probably a Vandal). Neither friendship nor a spirit of coöperation affected Rufinus and Stilicho, and internal policy degenerated into a succession of plots and rivalries with the two young Emperors as more or less dignified puppets. It is impossible to follow the tortuous and seemingly disconnected course of events which ensued, or to declare how far such men as

Roman folly

The battle of Hadrianople (378)

The division of the Empire

Stilicho were pursuing the interests of the State, how far they were laying the bases of personal authority. Only the roughest outline can be suggested and an arbitrary judgment of what is important.

Rufinus was murdered and his barbarian successor (Gainas) foolishly stopped the payment of the subsidy to the Goths. Although perhaps no excuse was needed by the Goths, who had not only discovered the weakness of the Empire but had increased their numbers from tribes beyond the Danube, yet Alaric, their young king, chose to use this breach of agreement as an excuse for war. At the head of his people he moved out of Macedonia and, gaining the pass of Thermopylæ by treachery, swept into Greece where he captured Athens, Corinth, Argos, and Sparta. Stilicho, who perhaps had planned to establish an independent sovereignty in Illyricum, marched against him and by skillful maneuvering blocked the Gothic leader at Elis. But fate was against him. Arcadius, either fearing an extension of his brother's nominal power or because he needed reinforcements to protect his part of the Empire from a threatened attack of the Huns, put an end to all prospect of further warfare without rebellion by ordering Stilicho to send to Constantinople the East-Roman troops who were in his army, and made Alaric a Roman officer by appointing him Prefect of Illyricum! Stilicho was obliged to allow his enemy and rival to escape from the trap. Four years of outward peace but internal plotting ended with the invasion of Italy by Alaric in 402. This was not successful, and Alaric was forced to retreat after an indecisive battle at Pollentia. Three years later an undisciplined horde of Vandals, Burgundians, and Suevi under Radagaisus penetrated the peninsula as far as Florence before it was hurled back by the invincible Stilicho. This apparently abortive raid into Italy, in which Radagaisus lost his life, really marks the collapse of the Western Empire. Unsuccessful in their southern advance, the defeated Germans with even larger forces crossed the Rhine in 406 and poured over Gaul in a resistless flood which did not stop until it had crossed the Pyrenees and inundated Spain. Isolated bodies of Roman troops in Gaul and Spain revealed the general collapse by creating their own emperors. The Maritime Alps and not the Rhine had become the imperial frontier!

Disaster in the provinces was met by folly at the Western capital. Stilicho, the one man in the West possessed of both military ability and statesmanship of the first water, was executed in 408 by the jealous or suspicious Honorius. With Stilicho dead, Alaric reap-

Alaric and his Visigoths

The fateful raid of 405

Alaric in Italy

peared and requested lands for his Goths and the title of *magister militum* for himself. Upon the Emperor's refusal he moved down into the peninsula and laid siege to Rome (408), still negotiating with the helpless Emperor for lands and a title. The city was too strong for assault, and Alaric was induced to withdraw by substantial bribes of gold, silver — and pepper! He marched northward to besiege Honorius at Ravenna, but the timely arrival of troops from the East saved the Western Emperor from defeat. Alaric turned southward again and besieged Rome a second time (410). Since the title of *magister militum* was not forthcoming from Ravenna, Alaric decided to create an emperor who would bestow it, and by threatening to destroy the corn reserves of Rome he prevailed upon the Roman Senate to recognize Attalus, a Roman of distinguished family, as emperor. The title was now his, but the city still held out until it was betrayed by slaves within the walls, and for three days Rome suffered pillage. Without adequate food supplies it was impossible for a hostile army to maintain itself in Italy, so to get control of the imperial sources of grain Alaric planned a conquest of Africa. He moved southward, but after pillaging Capua and Nola he died an inglorious death after a drunken orgy and was buried in the bed of the river Busento. Alaric had shown no desire to destroy the Empire. He was affected by the glory of a name and, like so many barbarian leaders who came after him, preferred to live under the Empire as a recognized official rather than as an independent leader of a hostile people. The official title must be obtained even at the point of the sword. The career of Alaric introduces us to this characteristic of barbarian politics, that of Theodoric will confirm it, that of Clovis may explain it.

Upon the death of Alaric the leadership of the Goths passed into the hands of Ataulf, his brother-in-law. Ataulf was no enemy of Rome and tried to Romanize himself and his Gothic subjects. He received from Honorius the coveted title of *magister militum*, which the Emperor had refused to bestow upon Alaric, and marrying Placidia, the Emperor's sister, led his Goths out of Italy into Gaul, the southern part of which he occupied without resistance. Under his successors the Goths extended their power from the Atlantic to the Rhine, as far north as the river Loire, and southward into Spain. Their relations with Rome alternated between friendship and hostility. At one time they are found in arms against the forces of the Empire, but one of their kings died fighting as an ally of Rome in the

The sack of Rome (410)

His death

The Visigoths enter France

great battle against the Huns. Their control of southern Gaul lasted until the sixth century, when the battle of Vouglé made the Franks the supreme barbarian tribe.

While the Visigoths were pushing their way westward and establishing themselves in Gaul, other barbarian tribes were engaged in dismembering the Empire elsewhere. It has already been mentioned that in the year 406 the Vandals, Alani, and Suevi had burst the frontier defenses and invaded Gaul. These tribes had passed into Spain before the coming of the Visigoths and had established petty independent kingdoms. The strongest of these invading tribes, the Vandals, were settled in Spain when opportunities were offered them in Africa. The African provinces were in a state of political and religious unrest; Boniface, the Roman officer in command, was involved in a bitter rivalry with Aëtius, the great imperial general, while the Church was distracted by the Donatist heresy. Something perhaps of the old Punic spirit was aroused and inspired the native population to throw off the Roman yoke. The Vandals, ever ready for conquest, saw the advantages of the situation, and Gaiseric, the Vandal leader, led his troops across the straits in 428. Only the walled towns resisted, and with the surrender of Carthage in 439 the Vandals were in complete control. From the land these vigorous wanderers took to the sea, perhaps originally to protect themselves from possible Roman attack; but their fleet was soon used for plunder and conquest. Gaiseric proved himself an able administrator and passed social legislation of an almost Puritan character. He was in constant communication with barbarian tribes, and it was he who conducted the successful siege of Rome in 455 and the fortnight of pillage which succeeded its surrender, and, somewhat undeservedly, has made the term Vandal a byword for wanton destruction (at least since the eighteenth century).

Gaiseric's most important correspondence was with the Huns. This tribe, which had set the "folk-waves" in motion, had altered somewhat since its first mad inruption into Europe. For half a century it had been exposed to the civilizing influence of Rome. Bands of Huns had found service in the Roman army, and many Romans served at the Hunnish court or had fled thither to escape taxation or persecution. In the year 435 the Huns acquired a leader of exceptional ability, whose reported ruthlessness led contemporaries to call him the "Scourge of God." This great warrior was Attila. He had sufficient political acumen to realize that the Huns were not

*The Vandals
in Africa*

Gaiseric

*Gaiseric's
diplomacy*

Attila

numerous enough to attain any real measure of success against the organized strength of the Empire, and he therefore set about building up a great confederation of the tribes which lay between the Volga and the Rhine. His first attack was directed against the Eastern Empire, which purchased immunity by granting an annual subsidy. For a few years he maintained a court in Pannonia and by means of embassies and wide correspondence kept in close touch with imperial conditions. In 450, either because the Eastern Emperor Marcian put an end to the subsidy, or because the Vandal king Gaiseric had suggested the time to be opportune, or, as romance will have it, because the princess Honoria sought escape from an enforced celibacy by pledging herself to the king of the Huns, Attila crossed the Rhine with the largest army that Rome had yet to face. Terror — or pride — has estimated its strength at half a million of fighting men.

There was no Roman force in Gaul which could hope to oppose this barbarian horde, which proceeded at a leisurely pace, capturing Rheims, Amiens, Paris, and Orléans. Aëtius, the commander-in-chief of the imperial forces of the West, called upon the barbarian occupants of Gaul to rally to the support of Rome against a menace which threatened them no less than it did the Empire. He succeeded in assembling a miscellaneous army of Franks, Burgundians, Visigoths, Gallo-Romans, and Alemanni, with which he was able to stop the invasion at Châlons in 451. The valor of the Visigoths saved the day, and although the Huns were not defeated Attila decided to retreat. From Gaul the Huns moved down into Italy, stormed Aquileia, and laid siege to Rome (452). Aëtius had followed but, deprived of Visigothic and Frankish help, did not risk a battle.

Attila withdrew from Rome, perhaps awed by the vision of the angels who hovered (in Raphael's picture at least) above the head of Pope Leo I, as he came out from the city to intercede with the Hunnish king. It is more probable that his heart was moved by a more substantial vision in the form of a bribe, and that he feared the sickness which has beset every northern army to invade Italy, and realized that he was in danger of being cut off from his headquarters on the Danube. The vast horde withdrew; and when Attila died in the following year the congeries of tribes which he had welded into something like an empire disintegrated, and the Hun ceased to be a European menace for centuries to come. The story

that Attila's invasion of Italy in 452 led to the founding of Venice by terrified refugees is probably legend. The establishment of that famous city more probably took place at the time of the Lombard conquest in the following century.

If the first half of the fifth century, in which Gaul, Spain, and Africa had been lost and in which frightened citizens had seen the camp fires of the enemy from the walls of Rome, had been desperate for the Empire, the second half was disastrous. Sturdy old Aëtius, whose ability had outweighed the numbers of the Huns, was assassinated by the incompetent Emperor Valentinian III, who in turn received the same treatment from a senator ambitious to assume the imperial purple. Gaiseric refused to recognize the new Emperor, Maximus, and appeared before Rome (455). Pope Leo, who had negotiated with Attila, pleaded with the Vandal king. As a result of his intercession the city was surrendered on condition that while the Vandals might pillage for fourteen days there should be no destruction by fire nor any massacre of the population. These conditions were fulfilled and the Vandals returned to Africa.

*Gaiseric sacks
Rome (455)*

In the next twenty years five emperors were created, assassinated, or dethroned by barbarian chieftains: by Ricimer who succeeded Aëtius at the imperial court, by Gaiseric, or by Orestes. Things came to an end with the reign of Romulus Augustulus, son of Orestes, who had once been an officer in the army of Attila. Orestes, who was in virtual charge of the Western Empire, refused the demand of his fellow barbarians for one-third of the imperial lands. He was murdered and his imperial son placed in honorable confinement (476). The new leader, Odoacer of the tribe of the Rugii, declined to name another emperor, but sent the insignia of office to Zeno, Emperor of the Eastern Empire at Constantinople. From Zeno Odoacer requested and received the title of "patrician." It is for this reason that the year 476 has been widely accepted as the date of the fall of the Empire. But 476 merely concluded officially the movement begun in 406. The Roman Empire still existed and continued to exist for more than a thousand years, but the western portion was lost — and forever.

*Imperial
chaos*

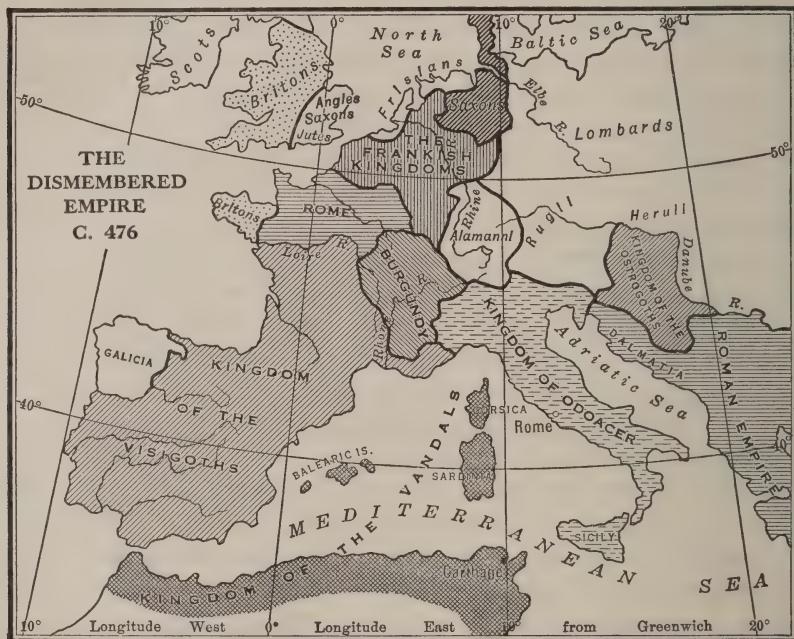
Odoacer took his new office seriously. He continued the Roman institutions and, while he granted the barbarian demand for land, he tried to preserve the Empire by a punitive expedition against the Rugii, the Heruli, and the Scirii (487). His victory over these peoples had strange consequences, for the Rugii appealed for as-

Odoacer

sistance to the Ostrogoths, who by their acceptance brought into prominence one of the finest of the barbarian kings, Theodoric.

Theodoric was no stranger to the Roman Empire. Not only had he been brought up at the Eastern court as a hostage, but he had been a party to the plot which had placed Zeno upon the throne. In 488, when Theodoric was considering the appeal of the Rugii, Zeno offered no objection to the proposed invasion of Italy although he had already recognized Odoacer as his patrician! Theodoric's

Theodoric and the Ostrogoths



March was one of triumph. In three swift battles he defeated Odoacer but was unable to capture his stronghold at Ravenna. Treachery succeeded where machines of war had failed. At a banquet held to decide upon the terms of surrender, Odoacer was assassinated by the servants of his host and the Gothic king became the ruler of Italy. His position, however, was peculiar. Zeno, who if he had not actually encouraged the expedition had done nothing to oppose it, now refused to recognize the title of patrician which Theodoric had assumed. Hence Theodoric remained as a Germanic king of the Goths and the self-appointed Roman ruler of Italians.

Throughout his long reign he did his best to continue the tradition.

tions of the Empire. Beyond granting the customary one-third of the imperial lands to his Goths and protecting their Arian Faith, he made no distinction between his old and his new subjects. Roman institutions were continued and the Roman law affected Goth and Roman alike. The Roman Senate recovered something of its old dignity and Romans held important positions at court. The statesmanlike Cassiodorus was his secretary; the philosophers Boethius and Symmachus received his favor until unjust suspicion caused them to be judicially murdered. He was tolerant to Jews and Roman Christians and did not exempt Goths from taxation. He showed an interest in art and education and supported the schools. His foreign policy which, even as his domestic policy, may well have been directed by Cassiodorus, was marked by the same spirit of conservatism and common sense. He made alliances, particularly by marriage, with all of the leading barbarian tribes, and by his influence saved Sicily from the Vandals, and the Burgundians, Thuringians, Alemanni, and Visigoths from complete disaster at the hands of the rising power of the Franks.

There was one great weakness in his position—he was an Arian and his Goths were Arians. This factor did more than anything else to prevent him and his successors from gaining the loyal support of his Roman subjects. The Roman Church would not, could not compromise; and while it might be grateful to the Goths for their tolerance it never forgot that they were heretics, and a heretic was immeasurably worse than a pagan.

Its weakness

The close of the fifth century saw a new Europe. Britain was in the hands of the Angles and the Saxons; France was divided between Celts, Franks, Visigoths, and Burgundians; Spain ruled by Visigoths, Vandals, Alani, and Suevi; Africa a Vandalic kingdom; and Italy in the hands of the Ostrogoths. The Danubian lands were inhabited by the residue of tribes shattered in a century of warfare. But in Gaul and Italy the nominal authority of Rome continued. Barbarian chieftains were anxious to procure titles of Roman dignity, in part to satisfy their vanity, but in part (and in large part) to impress their Roman subjects and to make easier the task of ruling.

The new Europe

What of the Roman population in this century of crumbling Empire? How had they fared as wave after wave of invasion passed over them? It is very difficult to say, but it is probable that conditions were better than is generally supposed. The first years of invasion were undoubtedly accompanied by terrific suffering as the bar-

The fate of the Romans

barians broke through the lines of restraint and gave way to the temptations of plunder and self-indulgence. There was the inevitable spoliation of churches and monasteries, the destruction of crops and cottages, the stoppage of trade, the disintegration of families, torture, mutilation, death, and slavery. While the barbarians *moved*, things were at their worst. When, on the other hand, a land had been conquered, wanton destruction came to an end and the barbarians attempted to systematize their relations with the vast Roman majority which had come under their control.

In general, it may be assumed that a barbarian leader settled his followers as "guests" (*hospites*) upon the estates of the conquered. The guest may have demanded anything from a third to one-half of the arable land, together with a share of the woodland and pasture. There is no reason to suspect that the barbarian treated his Roman host with cruelty. Indeed, it would be to his interest not to do so, for the Roman understood the management of estates better than did the Vandal, Goth, or Frank. Many Romans retained their possessions and many rose to positions of trust and prominence under the barbarian régime.

The treatment of the Roman subject was not left to chance or the vagaries of individual caprice. The barbarian soon recognized the value of written laws, and Sigismund of the Burgundians, Gaiseric of the Vandals, Alaric II of the Visigoths, and Theodoric the Ostrogoth described the status, responsibilities, rights, and privileges of the Romans and of their own followers in established codes of law. The Roman did not receive equality, but he did acquire recognition.

With the exception of the Franks the barbarian tribes were Christians of the Arian sect. They were surprisingly tolerant, however, and outside of Africa (where the Roman Church had already been weakened by the Donatist heresy) there was no organized persecution. The Roman clergy were not only permitted to continue their services but received positive assistance and substantial grants from barbarian kings. The reason for such tolerance was undoubtedly the vast numerical superiority of the Romans, whom it would be impolitic to antagonize and whose loyalty could be the more easily obtained at the price of religious freedom. The clergy did not always show a sense of gratitude, and many a Gallic bishop was reasonably suspected of treason.

The barbarian invasions hastened, for the time being, the decline of the art and culture of Rome. There are great writers in the fifth

Law-codes

The Arian problem

Moral decay

century but the sixth is almost barren. A general collapse in morals accompanied the general dislocation of society, a collapse which the Church might regret but could not prevent. The slave trade flourished more than before, and Christians were as usurious as the Jews. Rome went laughing to her death — *moritur et ridet*. “The people spent their time in playing and wining at the brothels and play-houses.” The church services continued, of course, but they were attended in a perfunctory manner: “Many entered the portals of the House of God still smelling of the incense of demoniacal sacrifice and came from partaking of the cup of the demons to drink from the Cup of the Lord.” . . . “Yesterday in the amphitheatre, today at church; in the evening at the Circus and in the morning at the altar.”

But all was not lost. The outlines of the imperial system were continued in the Church and in the states which rose from the ruins of the Western Empire. The Latin tongue clearly overmatched the barbarian tongue in the lost provinces, and if culture declined it did not cease to live. “From the first there were some among the Germanic invaders themselves who felt attached to it; others withstood its attraction, but only for a time. In the struggle between a world which was civilized and latinized, and barbarians who were just then coming out of their native forests and the loose organization of a pastoral state, civilization was bound to conquer, whatever its losses; and civilization meant Latin and Rome.”¹

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CHAPTER IV

GAUL UNDER THE MEROVINGIANS

The Franks

OF ALL the barbarian tribes, the Salian Franks made the most lasting impression upon the history of Europe, and their history is inseparable from the major events of the Middle Ages. Their amazing success (in view of the paucity of their numbers) was due, in large part, to circumstance. Unlike the other invaders, the Franks never lost contact with the barbarians beyond the Rhine; and while other tribes were, without exception, Arian, they adopted the Roman form of Christianity, a fact which went far to lessen the hostility of their orthodox subjects.

Their early history is practically unknown. By the middle of the fourth century they had moved into the territory between the rivers Meuse and Scheldt (i.e., the region known as Toxandria), where, about the year 359, they became *fæderati* under the Emperor Julian. Here they remained undisturbed, but the disappearance of the Latin tongue in this region leads one to assume that their presence proved disastrous to the maintenance of Roman civilization. In the course of time they tired of this dependence, and under one of their half-mythical kings, Clojo, grew so restless that the Roman general Aëtius was obliged to undertake a campaign against them in 431. Although Aëtius was successful in this particular expedition, the Franks quickly recovered and, moving westward, captured Cambrai and extended their territory to the river Somme. Under Clojo's successor, Merovech (from whom the dynasty took its name), the Franks were active allies of Rome and supported their late enemy, Aëtius, in his great battle with Attila at Châlons (451). This loyalty to Rome was continued by Childeric, who directed the fortunes of the Franks from his capital at Tournai until his death in 481. With the accession of his son Clovis, the Salian Franks entered upon a career of conquest which did not cease until the lands between the Rhine and the Pyrenees, the English Channel and the Mediterranean, were brought under their control.

Clojo

Clovis was a thorough barbarian. He combined the subtlety and deceit of the fox with the rapacity, strength, and cruelty of the

Clovis

wolf. He became the "eldest son of the Church," but Christianity failed to soften his brutality. For the first five years of his reign (he was only fifteen when his father died) the Franks remained quiet. But in 486, upon what pretext we know not, he moved against Syagrius, the leader of the Gallo-Romans, and inflicted a decisive defeat upon him at Soissons. The defeat and subsequent execution of Syagrius left the Gallo-Romans without a leader, and Gaul as far south as the Loire fell to the Franks. The change of rulers made little difference to the inhabitants; the invaders were few and the imperial lands afforded sufficient compensation to the conquerors so that it was rarely necessary to despoil the Roman land-owner.

Clovis spent the next few years consolidating his power in his newly won kingdom. In 493 he married Clotilde, the niece of Gundebad, king of the Burgundians. This marriage proved to be of utmost importance. The Burgundians had entered the Empire in 443, with the permission of Aëtius, occupying the region between the Jura and the Sâone to the expressed relief of the inhabitants, who preferred these kindly barbarians to the inefficient or rapacious officials of the Empire. The Burgundians were Arians, but while they were tolerant to their Catholic subjects heresy weakened their control. Clotilde, however, had been converted to "Roman" Christianity and brought to France, along with a private grievance, a missionary zeal and an aversion to Arianism. She at once undertook the conversion of Clovis, who permitted his children to be baptized but for a while retained his own preference for the heroic gods of the North. He succumbed at last, and the story of his conversion has the same barbaric appeal and lack of dignity as that of Constantine's.

On the eastern frontier the Franks were menaced by the confederation of tribes known as the Alemanni. In 495 Clovis led an expedition against them, and the two armies met somewhere along the Rhine. Legend places the battle at Tolbiac (Zülpich) and relates that Clovis began the conflict confident in his pagan gods. As the tide of battle turned against him he cried out: "Jesus Christ, Thou Whom Clotilde declares to be the Son of the Living God, Thou Who, men say, grantest Thine aid to those that are in peril and victory to those who trust in Thee, if Thou wilt allow me to triumph over my enemies and so witness Thy power, I will be baptized in Thy name. For I have called upon my gods, but I see that they

*The fateful
marriage with
Clotilde*

*The battle of
Tolbiac
(495)*

have turned from me; if they do not help those who believe in them, it is because they are impotent." The Lord heard his prayer and the army of the Alemanni was put to rout.

This victory over the Alemanni has a double significance. It ended for many years the westward movement of the tribes east of the Rhine. During the next four centuries Eastern tribes may occasionally rebel but they do not invade. In legend, if not in fact, the victory dates the conversion of Clovis and such Franks as he could coerce to the Christianity of Rome. For the history of France this submission of the Franks to Rome was of far greater moment than the submission of the Alemanni to the Franks. By this move the Franks became the *one* conquering tribe united to its subjects by the strongest of all ties — uniformity in religious belief. The Gallo-Roman could not regard the Frank as a pagan tyrant or a heretical despot as Romans regarded their masters in other conquered provinces. The Franks were "true" Christians ruling over "true" Christians. The bishops had become the natural leaders of the people, taking over many of the duties of the former *defensor civitatis*, and upon their attitude toward the rulers depended in large part the measure of popular obedience. If bishops were friendly they could serve as valuable administrative agents in the *civitates*; if the rulers were Arians episcopal support was always uncertain. By adopting the Roman Christianity, the Franks not only found the task of controlling their own subjects made easier, but Catholics under the rule of Arian kings looked to them as defenders of the Faith. The Catholic in Italy, Gaul, and Burgundy prayed for Clovis and not for Theodoric, Alaric, or Gundebad.

This Catholic connection had much to do with the expansion of the Franks. Clovis was a warrior by nature, and he did not need the excuse of religion to impel him to further conquest. But his Franks were few, and there would have been little prospect of success had Roman subjects rallied to the support of their conquerors against a Frankish invasion. The fact that both Goths and Burgundians were Arians smoothed the way to conquest. Bishop Avitus in Burgundy and the Bishop of Tours entered into treasonable correspondence with Clovis and assured him of the support, or at least the nonresistance, of their Catholic flocks.

Clovis first moved against the Burgundians, who were weakened by treason and intrigue, and he succeeded in obtaining the promise of a heavy tribute from Gundebad although he did not acquire

Burgundy itself. This conquest was reserved for his sons. Clovis next turned his attention to the Visigoths, whose kingdom touched the southern limits of Frankish territory. The campaign was won before it began. The Visigoths had been in southern Gaul for nearly a century and had partially adopted the milder life of the Romans without being able to replenish their stock, while the Franks could draw upon the vast reserves of their Teutonic allies or tributaries. Alaric II, the king of the Visigoths, was well-meaning but incompetent, in strong contrast to the masterful Clovis. But above all, the Goths were weakened by their Arianism. The country was honeycombed with treason; the Catholic bishops who had been treated with tolerance and favor showed their gratitude or zeal by corresponding with the enemy; and the Roman population, forgetful of the protection granted them in the *Breviarum Alarici*, welcomed the Franks as deliverers. There is a certain naïveté in Clovis' decision to undertake the Gothic war: "I am much displeased that these Arians retain a part of Gaul; let us advance with God's help and when we shall have conquered them, let us extend our domination over their territory." At Vouglé, in 507, the power of the Goths was shattered and only the provinces of Narbonne and Septimania remained unconquered by the Franks. In the eyes of Catholics everywhere the campaign had the aspect of a religious war, and now that Truth had triumphed over Error, Clovis and the Franks were regarded as the champions of the Church.

Fresh from his southern conquests, Clovis now sought to make himself undisputed master of the Franks. From their first appearance in Toxandria the Franks had been a confederacy, and while Clovis was the outstanding leader, there were other Frankish kings who ruled over particular tribes. The method adopted by Clovis in ridding himself of his rivals was simple and effective. Sigibert, Chloderic, and Ragnachar were murdered by betrayal and the important cities of Cologne and Cambrai were added to Clovis' domains.

Clovis died in 511 after a reign of thirty years, a generation which saw the Franks transformed from the status of Roman *fæderati* into that of masters of Gaul. The Roman connection was not entirely abandoned, for Clovis was pleased to accept the title of honorary *consul* from the Emperor Anastasius. His friendly relations with the Church and the administrative use he made of its bishops kept alive both the principles of Roman law and the imperial tradition. Clovis commands respect only as an able and

*The battle of
Vouglé (507)*

efficient warrior. If any man ever waded "through slaughter to a throne" it was the founder of the Frankish monarchy. "Astute, violent and cruel he remained a barbarian to the end of his reign."

On his death the vast kingdom he had created was, in accord with good Frankish custom, divided among his four sons. This practice of partition, which continued in France until 888, acted as an insurmountable barrier to the attainment of unity and bequeathed to France four centuries of civil war. In 511 Thierry received a portion with Rheims as a capital, Chlodomir established himself at Orléans, Childebert at Paris, and Chlotar at Soissons. There were four kingdoms and four kings. For twelve years the brothers were occupied in the administration or defense of their particular domains, but in 523 Chlodomir, Childebert, and Chlotar undertook the conquest of Burgundy which their father had left unfinished. Three campaigns covering nine years were necessary to complete the subjugation of that obstinate kingdom which, when finally conquered, was divided among the victorious brothers. Chlodomir had died during the second campaign (524) and his territory had been seized by Childebert and Chlotar, the problem of inheritance being simplified by the murder of Chlodomir's sons.

With Burgundy under control, the Frankish kings turned their attention to Provence, which had been saved for the Goths in the Vouglé campaign by the intervention of the great Theodoric, father-in-law of the defeated Alaric II. Once more fortune smiled upon the Franks. The Emperor Justinian had begun his attempt to reconquer the western portion of the Empire and had sent his army to drive the Ostrogoths from Italy. Theodoric was dead and Vitigis, the Gothic king, was fully occupied in defending his kingdom from the advance of imperial arms. As the price of their neutrality the Franks received Provence.

In other ventures the Franks had varying fortune. A campaign against the Visigoths in Septimania and in Spain (542) was without success. For a while the Franks threatened to become masters of northern Italy, but any serious efforts in the peninsula ceased under Theodebald, the ineffective grandson of Theodoric. In Germany the Bavarians submitted to Frankish control but were allowed to retain their national institutions and laws. A vigorous campaign against the Thuringians was successful and resulted in the marriage of Chlotar to the future St Radegunde. The Saxons were able to

avoid subjugation but purchased immunity from attack for an annual tribute of five hundred cows.

Thierry had followed his brother Chlodomir to the grave in 534 and his line became extinct by 555, so that when Childebert died in 558 Chlotar was left the sole ruler of a territory larger than his father's by the inclusion of Burgundy and Provence, and of wider influence, through the submission of the Bavarians and Thuringians. But Chlotar had four sons, and when he died in 561 the unity which circumstance had granted was lost through tradition. Again there were four kings and four kingdoms: Charibert at Paris, Guntram at Orléans, Sigibert at Rheims, and Chilperic at Soissons.

It is neither necessary nor profitable to go into the details of the next fifty years. It was a half century crowded with violence, treachery, and revenge, characterized by ambition without scruple and murder without remorse. But it was a period of importance, for it was a period of transition and readjustment, in which old habits were being discarded and in which new principles appeared. Some of its characteristics cannot be overlooked. In the first place, one of the four kingdoms disappeared — and forever. When Charibert died in 567 his kingdom was partitioned among his brothers with no regard to geographic location and with Paris as a sort of no man's land, theoretically ruled by the kings in common. The three remaining kingdoms assumed more definite boundaries and became sufficiently distinct to acquire new names. Rheims became the capital of Austrasia, Soissons of Neustria, and Orléans of Burgundy. In the second place, an almost unbroken series of exhausting civil wars weakened the royal authority everywhere and permitted powerful subjects to conduct themselves as quasi-independent princes. In the struggle for supremacy both Sigibert and Chilperic were murdered and their kingdoms fell to children. The laws of the Franks did not allow women to inherit a throne, but if they could not reign themselves they could rule in the name of their sons. Brunhild, widow of the murdered Sigibert, and Frédégonde, slave, concubine, and queen of Chilperic, at once established regencies.

The implacable hatred between these two queens, which began when Frédégonde was suspected (not without reason) of murdering, or causing to be murdered, Brunhild's sister Galeswintha and was kept alive by her murder of Sigibert, involved the two kingdoms in a generation of devastating war. Brunhild is by far the more attractive character; Frédégonde was hardly more than an unscrupulous

*A half century
of horror*

*Brunhild and
Frédégonde*

but able adventuress. Brunhild had qualities which mark her out as the one person in Gaul possessed of statesmanship. She had been well educated and seemed to understand the problems which beset her kingdom. Of these the most immediate and difficult was the future of the kingship. Brunhild realized that every weakening of the royal power meant the acquisition of strength by the magnates of the kingdom, and she directed all her energies to maintain the prerogatives of the crown against the opposition of usurping subjects. It was a difficult task and in the end proved impossible. She could find little reliable support, for the Gallo-Romans in town and country were without organization, the Church was corrupt, and the Franks instinctively favored a weak royalty in their own interests. The magnates resented the efforts of this severe champion of royalty, who defended the rights of her grandchildren as energetically as she upheld those of her son. They combined against her, her army deserted her on the eve of a critical battle, and she herself was put to death after protracted insult and torture (613). Among the leaders of this successful opposition were two men whose fame lies in their descendants. Pepin of Landen and Arnulph, Bishop of Metz, enjoy the honor of being the founders of the Carolingian house.

The failure of Brunhild to maintain the rights of the king against the advancing power of the aristocracy of Austrasia left Chlotar II (son of Frédégonde and Chilperic) the sole king of the Franks. But Chlotar II was hardly more than king in name. He exercised no more control than the magnates saw fit to allow him, while Austrasia and Burgundy assumed a position of virtual independence under their opposition leaders. In 614 an assembly of influential men, representing the Church and lay society, met at Paris and established the conditions by which Chlotar II might rule. Four of the articles are worthy of mention in the light of future events. From the Empire was borrowed the legal fiction that the king was subject to, and not above, the law, though centuries were to elapse before this principle became a fact, and it was England and not France that first succeeded in establishing it. In the second place, the magnates urged that the counts charged with administrative functions should be chosen from the district over which they were to preside. In theory, this had, of course, the advantage that men might be chosen who were familiar with local conditions; but in practice, by combining official duties with landed possessions this

system readily lent itself to abuse, official duties and private rights became hopelessly confused, and the upshot was that the counties tended to become little principalities at the expense of the central government. The churchmen present, with more justification, sought to free the Church from too much lay interference. They insisted that bishops be canonically elected, i.e., that they be chosen



by the clergy and the people (*clero et populo*) and not merely appointed by laymen with interests in the diocese. As a matter of common justice all disapproved of arbitrary taxation and demanded that legacies to the Church be respected by the royal authority. The fact that Chlotar II agreed to these demands is evidence of the marked decline in royal authority since the days of Clovis and Chlotar I.

The aristocracy of Gaul had scored a victory in 614, but it realized that the basis of its power was, after all, the kingship. Without a king nothing could be expected save anarchy and a state of chaos in which no rights could exist. A strong king meant subordination. The happy medium was a king who would provide a

The need of kingship

nominal source of authority but who was not strong enough to exercise full regal rights. Acting upon this principle, the "great ones" of Austrasia demanded a king of their own, and Chlotar II complied by appointing his son Dagobert. The actual control of Austrasia remained in the hands of Pepin and Arnulph. In 629 Chlotar II died, and Dagobert succeeded to the throne of Neustria but, like his father, he was obliged to name his son, Sigibert, king of Austrasia. The death of Dagobert in 640 ended the active career of Merovingian kings. For another century members of the House of Clovis will wear the regalia and the long hair of kingship, but the real power slips into the hands of the *major domus*, one of whom, in 751, will assume the crown itself and the Carolingian dynasty will succeed the line of Merovech.

The Major Domus

The *major domus*, or mayor of the palace, whose career will be so eventful, was originally a domestic official. The king lived much as did any other important man, on the proceeds of his various estates or *villæ*. The management of each of these was intrusted to a bailiff, but the control of the entire royal economy was placed in the hands of a super-bailiff, the *major domus*. Positions involving personal attendance upon the king were much sought after and, as a rule, were held by men of prominence and wealth. The office of *major domus* was no exception. Pepin of Landen and Arnulph of Metz, who had led the successful opposition to Brunhild, successively held the office of *major domus* of Austrasia. As the whole of the administration centered in the palace the mayor became in the end the head of the administration. Under a strong king he could have but a restricted influence; but when the royal power was held by children, his intimate connection with the royal household gave him opportunities for direct control enjoyed by no other magnate. Minorities and *fainéants* or "do-nothing" kings were common enough in the seventh and eighth centuries, and it was during this period that the mayor of the palace revealed himself as the power behind the throne.

As the *major domus* grew in power and influence his office became complicated. On the one hand, he was the personal representative of the king and was responsible for the collection of the revenues and the maintenance of the military services; but, on the other, as a member of the aristocracy he was expected to uphold its privileges. As Frankish Gaul became divided into the three regions of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, there were local interests to maintain as

well. After the death of Dagobert we hear little of kings but much of the mayors of the palace.

Grimoald, who followed Pepin in office as *major domus* of Austrasia, attempted to put his son upon the throne in 656, but the aristocracy was not prepared as yet for such a revolution and Grimoald paid for his presumption with his life. Neustria was disturbed for many years by the conflict between Ebroin, the *major domus*, and the magnates of Burgundy, led by St Leger. Ebroin was violent and cruel, but he made a desperate effort to maintain the power of his king as the only safeguard of the crumbling civilization of Gaul. He was murdered in 681 and the way was made clear for the predominance of the Carolingian line.

Since the failure of Grimoald to make his son king of Austrasia, the *major domus* of that kingdom had acted with caution. In 681 the leading personage of Austrasia was Pepin of Heristal, the grandson of Pepin of Landen and Arnulph of Metz. He may not have been mayor of the palace, for Austrasia was temporarily without a king. Pepin took advantage of the confusion which beset Neustria on the death of Ebroin to invade that unhappy kingdom, and by a victory at Testry near Saint-Quentin (686) he added the territory of Neustria to the land already under his control. The Neustrian king continued to reign but was not allowed to rule. Pepin conducted himself as a king, kept the offices of *major domus* in his own family, lent his assistance to the Christian missionaries anxious to convert the Frisians, and conducted a successful campaign against the Alemanni and Bavarians. At the time of his death, in 714, the century of anarchy was coming to an end.

Life in Merovingian Gaul could not have been pleasant. The stability of the Roman civilization had vanished and no new culture had appeared to take its place. Two centuries of conflicts between kings or between a king and his aristocracy had a disastrous effect upon the commoner. The weakening of the central authority brought about a collapse in the maintenance of law and order, which depended largely upon the character of local landowners. The king was theoretically the head of the State, the supreme lawgiver and judge, but much of his authority had passed into the hands of the great laymen and clerics, while the extent of his jurisdiction was curtailed by numerous grants of territorial immunity which set up regions from which royal officials, and sometimes even the king himself, were barred. For administrative purposes the king sur-

The rebellion of Grimoald

Pepin of Heristal

The battle of Testry (686)

Merovingian society

Administration

The court

rounded himself with officials whose duties were partly public and partly connected with personal attendance upon the king. Some of the most coveted positions in the State betray their domestic origin in their titles, as, for example, the *cubicularius* or treasurer, the *comes stabuli* or constable, or, again, the *mariscalcus* or marshal. In addition to these hybrid functionaries there were professional secretaries (*referendarii*) and judges (*comites palatii*). A third group known as *antrustiones*, and often chosen from the ranks of the freemen, were bound to the royal service by a special oath of loyalty. Doctors, surgeons, chaplains, actors, musicians, jesters, and casual visitors made up the rather miscellaneous body of the court. The king lived very much as a private landowner, living on his own and solving the difficulties of transport by visiting his *villæ* in rotation, for it was easier to go where the food was than to bring the food to a central palace.

Finance

The financial system was nearly as primitive as the domestic economy. The expenses of government were light, for public services were rendered without charge. Taxation was not seriously oppressive. The Roman *tributum* or land tax was continued, as was the capitation tax levied upon all the unfree of the kingdom. Income was increased from various sources: from tribute paid by subject tribes, booty in warfare, profits from the royal lands, a percentage of the fines levied in the courts, gifts made to the king by foreign rulers or ambitious subjects, profits from the sale of desirable offices in the State or appointments to vacant bishoprics or abbacies, from tolls exacted on goods in transit, or from duties collected at the frontiers.

Justice

Compurgation

The administration of justice was generally left to the *comites palatii*, although the king could reserve for himself and dispose of any case he chose. Evidence was employed, but the most usual means of reaching decisions were "compurgation," "ordeal," and the "wager of battle." In the first of these the defendant could bring into court a number of "compurgators" or "oath-helpers" (the number varying with the man's social rank), and these witnesses to character either swore that their man was of such a character that it was unthinkable that he had committed the alleged offense, or else that the plaintiff was of such a character that you might expect anything from him, except righteousness.

The ordeal is a typical example of the crude Christianity of the Merovingian era. It was naturally popular with judges, since it did

away with the embarrassment of making a decision by appealing the case to the justice of God. There were numerous types; but popular taste showed a decided preference for four: the ordeals of fire, of water (hot and cold), of the Holy Wafer, and of the Cross.

In the ordeal by fire the accused was required either to walk between two piles of burning faggots, carry a red-hot bar of iron a specified distance, walk over heated stones or metal, or, blindfolded, steer a course between heated stones irregularly placed. The ability to accomplish one of these tasks without permanent injury established the innocence of the accused. The ordeal of hot water was very similar: the accused must pluck a ring or other small substance from the bottom of a caldron filled with boiling water, the hand was then bandaged, and if after three days no signs of corruption or mortification appeared the ordeal was successful. The cold water ordeal was the simplest, quickest, and most convincing of all: the accused was tightly bound and thrown into the water; if he sank, he was innocent and was forthwith rescued; if he floated, he was deemed guilty, for Nature had revealed his guilt by rejecting his body. The ordeal of the Holy Wafer was used mainly by clerics and consisted of an oath of innocence attested by partaking of the Body of Christ. No false oath could receive such sanctification and the perjurer who attempted such a sacrilege would be sure to choke in the eating. The ordeal of the Cross was the least popular of the main types. In one method, the accused stood erect with arms extended sideways while priests recited prayers; the dropping of an arm before the orisons were finished established guilt. In another type, accuser and accused competed and he who first dropped his arms was adjudged guilty. This last method had at least the merit of obliging the plaintiff as well as the defendant to establish his innocence, a point lacking in the other ordeals and which may explain the comparative rarity and unpopularity of this one. The "wager of battle" appealed strongly to a vigorous and half-civilized people; the accused could challenge his accuser (and in later times even his judges) to a judicial duel and the winner vindicated his contention, for God would not allow the unrighteous cause to prevail. The practice of permitting substitutes, which encouraged the existence of professional "champions," took away much of its conviction; and when women, children, or cripples were involved, handicaps, despite the omnipotence of God, were evolved, such as tying the opponent's hand behind his back or compelling him to stand in a shallow pit.

*Ordeals:
Fire*

Water

Host

Cross

*Wager of
battle*

The legal system had other deficiencies besides its faulty way of establishing evidence. In a sense, there was no law at all, for four laws were administered, the Salic, the Roman, the Burgundian, and the Gothic, and a man could choose that of his own nation. Local customs, privileges, or immunities multiplied the complexities. Justice was administered at periodic meetings known as *mallbergen* or *placita*. In theory (except in the Roman law) the law was declared not by the count, who was merely a presiding officer, but by selected men from the locality, called *rachimburgi* or *boni homines* (the "good men and true" of later juries). They varied in number, although at least seven were expected to attend the court. When the guilt of the defendant had been established, the *rachimburgi* declared the law and the judge imposed sentence. Penalties were severe, torture and mutilation frequent. For the man with money, amelioration existed in the recognized custom of compounding the penalty for a money payment. Each penalty had its equivalent pecuniary value. Even murder could be paid for. The practice of permitting compensation to be paid to the offended party or to his relatives grew out of the attempt to put an end to private warfare and to eliminate interminable family feuds which might keep society in a state of constant unrest. When payment had been made the issue was closed. This payment to the offended person or persons was known as the *fædus*, and the Merovingian kings established a most important principle in exacting an additional payment, the *fredus*, to the State for breach of the public peace, evidence that private violence was regarded as an offense to the State.

For purposes of administration the kingdom was divided into *pagi*, sometimes identical with the former *civitates* but of no definite or uniform size. The *pagi* were governed by counts who were assisted in the subdivisions of the *pagus* by vicars, *centenarii*, or *thungini*, and in the urban areas by the bishops. Counts and bishops exercised regalian rights, holding court, levying and collecting taxes or tolls, coining money, and supervising the military quotas. Theoretically, the counts held their office by royal appointment and were removable at will; but there was a strong tendency to make the position hereditary, and when, in 614, the counts came to be chosen from those inhabiting the district, it became almost impossible to prevent public office from becoming the possession of the landed aristocracy. Large artificial divisions, at times consisting of a group of counties, were also established, generally known as duchies

Penalties

Fædus and
fredus

Administrative
divisions

or, if on the frontiers, as marches, under the control of dukes or margraves (*Mark Grafen*). These were fundamentally military divisions and the duke was essentially a military leader (*Dux*).

Urban centers were somewhat different. Here the power of the count was, in theory, shared by the bishop. In practice, the count's authority gradually diminished and the bishop became the most influential personage in the Merovingian municipalities. His court was sought by preference, for the Roman law was more clearly stated and far more extensive than any barbarian code and ecclesiastical penalties were milder than those inflicted by the court of count or vicar. But the cities had lost much of their former importance. Many had suffered severely under the barbarian onslaught or in the civil wars that had succeeded them. Industry collapsed, and while there was a profitable trade in the drugs, gems, spices, and silks of the East, and while the fair of St Denis at Paris was always well attended, this commerce was largely in the hands of Greeks or Jews. Wealth did not accumulate but men decayed.

The country districts preserved much the same outward organization as under the Empire. Merovingian life centered around the *villæ* even more than in Roman times, and the *villa* became increasingly self-sufficient as industry decayed in the towns. The *villa* had its smiths, its cloth-makers, its armorers, its bakers, millers, and brewers. The monasteries, too, were self-contained or even made a profit from agriculture or industry. Land became the most desired possession and was used to reward officials and faithful followers or to buy support. The exploitation of land led to the rapid extension of an old method of landholding which in time was to revolutionize society. This was the *precarium* or *beneficium* and was completed by the double process of request and concession. An individual would appear as a suppliant before a bishop or abbot and ask for a piece of land. He would agree not to alienate it but to cultivate it, enjoy the usufruct, and then at the expiration of a fixed term, generally at his death, to allow the land with all its improvements to return to the original possessor. The Church was often willing to grant this "benefit," which afforded a profitable means of returning a favor or of getting land cultivated which otherwise would remain unproductive. In origin the *beneficium* was always a temporary grant, but in later ages it became hereditary and as the

Cities

*The changes
in the systems
of land-
holding*

Precarium

"fief" was the fundamental unit of the feudal system. Great lay-
men soon followed the Church in bestowing benefices, and kings

Beneficium

Fief

granted lands to officials in lieu of salary. This practice had serious consequences, for in the days of weakened kingship, not only did the land tend to pass from father to son, but the office connected with it came to be regarded as hereditary.

The Christianity of the Merovingian age was typical of the rough state of society. The barbarians of Gaul had been converted but it was a Christianized paganism that they professed. Religious observance, like political institutions, cannot without penalty outstrip the social development of a people. Pagan practices, supplemented by superstition, vitiated the purer Christian cult. The Church was only partly to blame for the gross belief in relics and shrines. It is true that the Merovingian clergy hardly knew more than to read and write and that some did not even possess that accomplishment. But it is difficult for men to appreciate abstractions at their true value, and they find it simpler to provide a symbol to represent a mystery and then fall into the easy error of confusing the symbol with the thing symbolized and of worshiping what was meant to be a mere reminder. It must be recognized that, as a result of this habit, many of the so-called "abuses" of the Church were but the fumbling efforts of a very simple people to solve the esoteric mysteries of Christianity.

Pagan survivals were numerous and the worship at (if not of) sacred wells and fountains, oftentimes connected with real or imaginary Christian saints, continued for many years. Charms which served in the days of paganism were still used with little or no disguise. "Christianity had colored these charms but it had not effaced their heathen origin; and because the tilling of the soil is the oldest and most unchanging of human occupations, old beliefs and superstitions cling to it, and the old gods stalk up and down the brown furrows when they have long vanished from the houses and roads."¹ Omens were in favor, the future was read by the chance opening of sacred books, and a comet was the infallible precursor of disaster. The life of the Christians was beset on every side with peril. The Devil with his unnumbered following of fiends hovered about everywhere, setting traps for the unwary soul. One woman nearly ate a fiend hidden in a lettuce leaf. The multitude of these unseen enemies was partly offset by the beneficence of the saints, who were called upon to render every conceivable service and, if we may credit the many legends of the time, did comply in numerous cases which

seem unworthy of divine intervention. An Irish saint was once embarrassed by the arrival of a large and unexpected company of guests. He had nothing with which to regale them, for his beer had been but newly brewed. But a compassionate angel caused a rapid fermentation which must have been effective, for we are told that some of the guests became powerfully drunk, at which the chronicler naïvely remarks, "and those who heard of this gave thanks to Christ." Pilgrims flocked to shrines which sprang up wherever the real or supposed relic of a saint was to be seen, and relics were not only venerated for themselves but because of the cures which they effected.

But however crude Christianity was, it was the only civilizing force in Gaul, and the culture that came later owed everything to the Church. The Church was in many respects the heir of the Empire. It stood for the maintenance of order and the stability of tradition. Its churches, chapels, and monasteries offered asylum to those pursued by their enemies or oppressed by the miseries of life. The priesthood, the most effective mediator between rulers and conquered, not only proved to be valuable as executors of the law, but succeeded in introducing amelioration into legislation, furthered the extension of the principles of the Roman law, and at least tried to establish a moral code by which men might rule their lives. We should not express surprise that the Church was no better than it was. The age was rough and violent, and it would be unreasonable to expect the men of the Church to be vastly superior to the society in which they were born. But many of them did their best, and some bishops at least dared to oppose the arbitrary rule of the Frankish conquerors and by their power of excommunication wielded a weapon before which the boldest often shrank.

Then, too, the clergy represented what there was of culture, literature, and education. The monasteries and the cathedral clergy had schools of sorts where was taught such culture as was contained in Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Business and Learning*, the *Ars Grammatica* of Donatus, or the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius. The service of the smallest parish required the singing of psalms, which meant that some of the children who assisted in the service received at least a smattering of instruction. Literary works continued to be written, but the output was small and the average quality poor. Of prose, the best exponent was Gregory of Tours, whose *History of the Franks* is the standard authority for the events of the seventh century and

*The good
work of the
Church*

Education

whose anecdotes of the shrine of St Martin reveal clearly the theology of as fine a churchman as Gaul possessed. Poetry was well represented by Fortunatus, who called upon all the gods of Olympus to aid his Christian Muse and whose hymns, the *Pange lingua* and the *Vexilla regis prodeunt* are still sung in Catholic churches. Art suffered more than literature. Little has survived beyond a few bad statues, the record of mural paintings depicting the lives of saints or conventional scenes from the Bible story, and some thickly jeweled examples of the goldsmith's work and the enameler's art.

Taken by and large, the Merovingian age was one of decomposition and decay. It was a period of disaster, an undeniable "Dark Age," a period of precocious kings who died, destroyed by debauchery, before they were thirty. An era of brigandage, plunder, and destruction, of widespread misery and unhappiness, of epidemics and plagues, wasting diseases, leprosy, and infinite variations of nervous disorders. Morality was at a low level and the reiterated canons of church councils indicate the dissolute nature of clerical as well as lay society.

Yet there were two notable elements of vitality which had not been destroyed and would not die. One of these came from Ireland, directly or in a roundabout way through Scotland and England, and expressed itself in missionary enterprise among the Frisians or the barbarians east of the Rhine. The other was the strength in the House of Pepin and Arnulph. The two forces later combined and the union of the Church with the Carolings resulted eventually in the revival of the Empire.

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CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNINGS OF MONASTICISM

IT is impossible to imagine the Middle Ages apart from monasticism. Not only did it absorb the lives of hundreds of thousands of men and women, but it expressed the best and the worst aspects of medieval Christianity. Art, literature, industry, and education found shelter behind monastery walls. Forests were cleared, swamps drained, rough places made plain by the intelligence of monkish brains and the labor of monkish hands. Abbeys vied with cathedrals in the glories of religious architecture; the representation of biblical scenes reacted upon the drama; the greatest of hymns were first heard in the cloister.

But there was a darker side to monasticism. There was sloth as well as industry, luxury as well as abstinence, greed as well as self-denial, despondency as well as exaltation, black superstition and blacker vice as well as culture and saintliness. And this because monasticism appealed to so many types of men and women and offered them so many more opportunities of self-expression than society could hope to do. Monasticism was a recognized career and "ensured such a culture of the personality as should guarantee a blessed life here and hereafter." It attracted those who lived in terror of invaders or in distress at the social degradation around them. It appealed to the man or woman of moral earnestness and to the religious enthusiast or fanatic. It called to the student, for where else was there quiet and leisure in those rough days and where else were books to be found? But it appealed to the ambitious as well, for monasteries were wealthy, abbots rivaled Cæsar in their might, and men of low birth could aspire to high office. Along with the loftiest of motives were ranged "indolence, discontent, weariness, misanthropy, and ambition for spiritual distinction." This combination of the high and the low, the good and the bad, was the inevitable result of the universality of its appeal, and was what made monasticism so *vital* in the story of the Middle Ages.

Fundamentally, the basic principles underlying monasticism are contemplation and asceticism. Ever since man first conceived the

*The elements
of monasti-
cism*

existence of an Infinite Being, he has striven to penetrate the veil of mystery which so closely encircled him. For those who have felt that man was possessed of an immortal soul, which implied a relationship with the divine, or a spark which was part of the Infinite Light, there has always been a yearning to win back to the splendors which are not of this world. So long as there has been articulate religion, so long have there been men who have chosen to free themselves from the distractions or futilities of society, that in solitude they might contemplate the Eternal Mysteries. Life in society had so many temptations for the body, so few attractions for the soul. Only a Marcus Aurelius could say: "Even in a palace, life may be lived well." In all ages characterized by religious experience, the recluse, the hermit, the one who dwells alone, in other words the monk, can be found. Alexander the Great noticed them in India, where they had existed at least since the compilation of the "Veda."

With the desire for contemplation was associated the merit of asceticism. The appeal of asceticism rests upon the relative merits which have been attached to mind and matter or to the spirit and the flesh. The human mind has an irresistible tendency towards "dualism," a belief in a ceaseless conflict between the forces of good and evil, the powers of light and darkness. The concept of a divine law, eternal and immutable, the same for all men at all times and in all places, eliminated the possibility of things being "more or less evil" or, like the gentle curate's egg, "good in parts." Things were either definitely good or definitely evil. The philosopher asserted the supremacy of mind over matter: it was inevitable that the religious person should place the spirit above the flesh. Once the philosopher became a religious enthusiast, there was little alternative for him but contemplation and asceticism.

In Egypt, and especially at Alexandria where the traditions of the Platonic school continued, there arose a variety of sects whose views tended to magnify the merits of contemplation and the subjugation of the flesh, or the latter as a condition of the first. There were the Gnostics, who felt that God could be approached through knowledge, aided in the later stages by revelation. But this knowledge could be obtained only in proportion as the distractions of the world were eliminated. There were the Manichaeans, who, firm in the belief of the unending strife between good and evil, identified matter with evil and the creation of the God of the Old Testament; the things of the "spirit" with good and the witnesses of the God

Dualism

*Gnostic
influence*

of the Gospels. To "fight the good fight" meant to avoid matter wherever possible and to scorn the flesh or, what was even better, treat it with contempt and abuse and tame its insubordinations with the lash. A sinner could be whipped into a saint even as a more enlightened age has tried to whip a dullard into a scholar.

There was much in the New Testament which encouraged this ascetic tendency. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Self-discipline by self-denial made a strong appeal to men who viewed with critical eyes the luxury and self-indulgence of the Empire. In the first centuries of the Church, men had tried to live lives of abstinence and to withstand the calls of the flesh. They had given their money to the poor; they had eaten and drunk sparingly, dressed simply, and had extolled the merits of virginity and the celibate life. But they had done these things without leaving the society in which they lived.

By the middle of the third century, two forces drove them from the fellowship of community life. One of these was the Decian persecution, which was most violent in Egypt and caused hundreds to seek safety in the desert, where many came to love the life which had been forced upon them. The second was the growing worldliness within the Church. Long before the Edict of Toleration, in 313, the Church had become powerful through the strengthening of its organization, which it had modeled, consciously or unconsciously, upon that of the Empire. It had already been faced with the dilemma of cutting itself off from the world with all its sinfulness, and so preserving the purity of the early Faith, or of becoming an evangelical religion and entering the world to conquer it at the risk of contamination and secularization. It had chosen the latter, and to those who felt the overburdening sense of sin were added those who protested against the compromise which the Church had made. Even bishops led their flocks into the solitudes, and the "world was resigned, not so much because it was evil as because it was the world; the very facts of its constitution made holiness impossible." They went out from the cities and made themselves "settlements outside the walls, in gardens or solitary cots, seeking solitude, not from any harsh and deliberative hatred of mankind, but as knowing that the intercourse with, and the influence of, those unlike themselves in character could not profit but only harm them." Then, too, after the persecutions were over and the martyr's crown

*The growing
worldliness
of the
Church*

made difficult to win, men sought the reward of self-inflicted martyrdom.

St Paul of Thebes

The first Christian hermit of whom we have any sufficient record was St Paul of Thebes. During the Decian persecution he had fled into the desert, found a charm in solitude he had not experienced in society, and spent there the rest of his life, his daily bread provided by a raven. His importance lies in the fact that he provided an example and an inspiration for a more famous disciple, St Anthony, who was born at Alexandria about 250. Anthony was a serious and earnest Christian who took literally the charge to sell all and give to the poor. He put his sister into a woman's institution called the *parthenon*, took up his residence in a hut near the city, and devoted himself to works of charity. About the year 285 he felt the need of a severer mode of life and betook himself into the desert. There he lived in a cave, struggling with the temptations of the flesh and the Devil, and contemplating the glory and the wonders of God when his intervals of trial were over. The fame of his austerities gave Anthony a reputation for holiness which attracted many. Men flocked to him for encouragement or advice and settled near him, in the districts of Nitria and Scete, that by his active example they might easier endure the hard life by which they hoped to earn the rewards of Heaven.

In 305, or thereabouts, he consented to supervise the growing community of solitaries and so brought somewhat of order to what had been but a chaotic existence. In this manner the first monastic establishment in Christendom came into being. It was very unlike the type which was to become so familiar in the Middle Ages. No rule was invoked and nothing more than custom conditioned the activities of the monks. The men lived either alone or with one or two companions as they saw fit, ate when and where they liked, and performed what spiritual exercises seemed best to each, while some even engaged in such sedentary occupations as weaving or making baskets, to provide their meager food or to sell in the city for the relief of the poor. The only common center seems to have been a tree from which a scourge was hung that he who had sinned might expiate his offense.

St Pachomius

A step forward was made by St Pachomius, born into paganism in the last decade of the fourth century. He was converted and became a hermit about the year 310. A divine messenger appeared to him and told him to gather monks into settlements and provide

a rule for their guidance. Sometime between 315 and 320 he established his first community at Tabennisi, and the advantages of an ordered life were so obvious that by the time of his death (346) Pachomius had seen the foundation of nine monasteries and a nunnery. The life in a Pachomian settlement was still largely eremitical. The monks lived in separate huts, alone or in small numbers. There were important differences from the Antonian system. Work had been voluntary and easy at Nitria or Scete; compulsory labor, mainly agricultural, was the rule at Tabennisi. The community was to be self-sufficing, and the members took their turn at the cultivation of the fields and in the kitchens. So Pachomius taught to monasticism (which in turn taught Europe) that lesson of surpassing worth, "that in the labor of the hands there is dignity and not degradation." A common refectory was constructed, but the monks did not eat together or at stated times; each refreshed himself when he liked. The community assembled only for the greater church services of the week.

The establishments of Tabennisi exercised a powerful influence upon the West. They were visited by the great advocates of monasticism — by Cassian, who established a monastery at Marseilles and whose *Collations* won a place in the daily service of Western monasteries, and by St Jerome, who spread the cult of asceticism at Rome, fostered monasticism in Syria with the aid of the Roman ladies, Paula, Eustochium, and Melania, and gave the West a Latin translation of the rule of Pachomius.

The third stage in monastic development is connected with St Basil, who settled at Neocæsarea in Pontus about 360 and established a monastery which has been the pattern for Greek monasteries ever since. Basil's contribution was in eradicating the eremitical life from monastic settlements, making them completely cenobitic. Basil insisted that his monks live under a common roof and no longer in separate huts, that they eat at a common table and at definite times, and that they assemble six times daily for services in the chapel. Great emphasis was placed upon labor, not only in the fields of the monastery but in works of charity. "A working monk is plagued by one devil, an inactive one by a host." No vows were required of those who sought admission. The monk was to help his fellow men, and to carry out this principle schools were established and orphanages maintained.

While Egyptian monasticism in general was finding its way into

Tabennisi

The influence of Tabennisi

St Basil

a regulated channel, another tendency was revealed. Many individuals, carried away by a remorseless logic, felt that the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, i.e., between good and evil, must be waged without remittance. For such, the sedentary life at Nitria was little else than sloth, the severer routine at Tabennisi a hardly preferable compromise. They must fight alone. Heaven could only be won by overcoming Hell. This deadly logic often made the solitary nearer to the beast than to the angel, and we have weird glimpses of even weirder figures who destroyed the flesh that was destroying them. We hear of earnest Christians:

“ From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven. . . .”

We read of St Macarius, who sat for days in a mosquito-swamp as penance for killing one that had stung him; of St Silvania, who had not washed for sixty years; of St Macarius the Younger, who lived for three years on five ounces of bread a day and for seven on a more luxurious diet of raw herbs and pulse, only to be outdone by St Simeon, who imitated Christ at least to the extent of fasting during Lent, not once but for twenty-six consecutive years! This same Simeon is perhaps the most famous because the most bizarre of the solitaries. He lived for thirty-six years upon a pillar, some three feet in diameter (but surmounted by a railing?) and of a height which varied according to his saintliness until it reached a maximum of sixty feet. But alas! a stronger Simeon is recorded who maintained a lofty perch for sixty-eight years! With the Stylites we can leave those “ strange figures in the far distance, stark naked summer and winter, living on grass and berries, scarcely human; lonely tenants of prehistoric tombs waging perpetual conflict with troops of devils.” St Jerome has given us a vivid picture of what must have been the experience of thousands of the less fanatic:

“ My unkempt limbs were covered in shapeless sackcloth; my skin through long neglect had become as rough and black as an Ethiopian’s. Tears and groans were every day my portion; and if sleep ever overcame my resistance and fell upon my eyes, I bruised my restless bones against the naked earth. Of food and drink I will not speak. Hermits have nothing but cold water even when they are sick, and for them it is sinful luxury to partake of cooked dishes. But though in fear of hell I had condemned myself to this prison-house, where my only companions were scorpions and wild beasts, I

often found myself surrounded by bands of dancing girls. My face was pale with fasting; but though my limbs were cold as ice, my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead.”¹

Just how monasticism was introduced into the West is somewhat obscure. Athanasius, the exiled Bishop of Alexandria and the friend of Anthony, had visited Rome in 339 accompanied by two monks and may well have urged the following of the Egyptian example. At least, it is certain that by the end of the century there were monasteries at Aquileia, Milan, Ravenna, and Parma, while at Vercelli Bishop Eusebius compelled the clerics of his cathedral to live “in common” as under monastic rules. The Council of Saragossa, held in Spain in 380, made mention of monks in its sixth canon; but Fructuosus of Braga, who lived in the second half of the seventh century, was the first organizer of Spanish monasteries of whom we have any definite knowledge. Gaul showed a marked enthusiasm for monasticism, as well it might for, with the exception of Italy (and here, too, monasteries were numerous), no other European country had suffered so much from invasion and social chaos. In 362 St Martin had established a monastery near Poitiers and, upon his elevation to the see of Tours ten years later, another at Marmoutiers. Martin’s system was midway between that of Pachomius and that of Basil. The monks lived in separate huts but assembled for meals and for religious services. Early in the next century, Honoratus built a monastery on the island of Lerins and Cassian one at Marseilles. The seventh century saw the introduction of Celtic monasticism in Gaul, Germany, and Switzerland. Charlemagne held the Irish monks in high regard, admired the severity and sternness for which they were famous, and encouraged them to establish model monasteries throughout his kingdoms.

But monasticism though widespread suffered through a lack of uniformity. There were as many variations as there were establishments. There were rules but no Rule. Jerome had translated the rule of Pachomius, Rufinus that of Basil; Cassian had published a series of conferences with the “Fathers of the Desert,” which attempted to show that purity of heart, attained by asceticism and contemplation, could best be won in monastic settlements; Cæsarius of Arles had written instructions for a monastery and a

*Introduction
of
monasticism
into the
West*

*St Martin
of Tours*

Cassian

*The lack of
uniformity*

¹ Wright and Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

nunnery in his diocese, while St Augustine had made suggestions for the guidance of nuns, in a letter to his sister. This lack of a uniform regulation not only allowed monastic principles to express themselves in myriad ways, but prevented monasticism from being of any great use as a social force.

This was all to be changed. About 480 there was born at Nursia, in Italy, a young man of good family, named Benedict. He turned away from the world and sought consolation in a cave in a wild and uninviting district near Subiaco. As in the case of St Anthony, men found him out, settled near him, and looked to him as a leader. Thirteen monasteries grew up among the Sabine hills and recognized his general supervision. Either because this was far from the life he had planned or because of the envious conduct of the monks, he withdrew from Subiaco and, about 520, established the famous monastery of Monte Cassino. Here he spent the rest of his life and died about 550. It was at Monte Cassino that he composed the Rule which in later ages became the standard for monastic Orders and which, because of its wide adoption, deserves some detailed treatment.

The Rule, perhaps intended for Monte Cassino alone, enjoined upon the entering monk the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. In addition, it was understood that the monk was never to leave the monastery without the direct order or permission of his superior. This principle of "stability" went far to eliminate a class of monks who indulged a passion for wandering about the world under the comforting pretense of seeking a monastery of sufficient rigor. At the head of the monastery was to be an abbot, elected by the monks but empowered to appoint all other necessary officials. The whole ordering of the monastery rested with the abbot, and the monks took a vow to render him implicit obedience. The power of the abbot was restricted in two ways: in the obligation to consult with the community upon matters of importance (although he was not bound by their decisions) and in the awful fact that he was personally responsible to God for "all of his actions, all of his judgments and for the souls of each of his monks, as well as of his own."²

Judged by Eastern standards the Rule did not err on the side of severity. Eight hours of sleep, seven of labor, three of reading, four to five in prayer and praise of God, and one to two at table made up

*St Benedict
of Nursia*

*Monte
Cassino
(520?)*

The Rule

*The monastic
day*

² *Camb. Med. Hist.*, I, p. 539.

the normal day. The monks rose at the "eighth hour of night" (i.e., between one and two o'clock in the morning) to chant the Midnight Office, and as this normally consisted of the singing of fourteen psalms in addition to a reading from the Bible, it would be three o'clock or later before it ended. In summer this was immediately (or almost immediately) followed by *Lauds* (the Dawn Service), but in winter it was customary to return to the dormitories and complete the broken rest. The service of *Prime* (Sunrise) came one-half hour after *Lauds*, the interval being used for washing and getting things ready for the day's work in the fields or workshops. *Prime* was a very short service lasting from fifteen to twenty minutes, although additions were introduced later. Although the Rule makes no mention of it, it soon became customary to hold a "Chapter of Faults" immediately after *Prime*, to try violators of the monastic discipline. The name "chapter," so commonly in use now to designate branches of many societies unconnected with monasticism, is derived from the Benedictine practice of reading and commenting upon a chapter from the Rule before hearing the accusations. The next service, *Tierce* (between eight and nine in the morning), allowed time for reading in winter or work in summer. *Sext* came between eleven and twelve, so that another interval of work or study was available. In Paschal-time, and from Pentecost until September 14th, the monks were permitted to eat the first food of the day after *Sext*. In winter time a period of work followed until *Nones*; in summer the interval was given over to rest, i.e., the *siesta*. After *Nones*, if the monks had not eaten at *Sext* and if it were out of Lent, dinner was served, followed by another period of reading (in winter) or working (in summer) until *Vespers*. Supper followed *Vespers* and then the monks assembled once more in the church while there was yet light, listened to extracts from Cassian's *Collations*, performed the office of *Compline*, and "so to bed." These eight canonical hours were suggested by Psalm cxix: (verse 62) "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee" and (verse 164) "Seven times a day do I praise Thee."

The type of labor which the monk must perform was not specified, and while it generally consisted of fieldwork, a monk might be employed at any task or art for which he was peculiarly suited as long as he did not take "pride in his work." The Rule shows the same spirit of practicality in dealing with food and clothing. Two meals a day were allowed, except in Lent when only one was permitted, *Food*

Labor

dinner to consist of two cooked dishes (generally vegetables) and a fruit, supper of bread or one cooked dish. Meat was to be given only to the sick or the infirm. Fish and eggs or cheese appeared once or twice a week, and each monk was given a *hemina* of wine a day. If the "Kremsmünster cup" which dates from the eighth century is the Benedictine *hemina*, we need not sympathize with the monk, for the cup holds two quarts! Benedict laid down no hard and fast rules for clothing, allowing for differences in temperature. The monk was adequately clothed; he had underwear, stockings (trunk hose), tunic, and cowl. He possessed sandals for house wear and hob-nailed knee-boots for work in the fields. He was not expected to wear his clothes until they became worthless, but to give them to the poor while they were still serviceable. That his monks might appear respectable, Benedict allowed a "best" tunic and cowl for wear when necessity compelled them to travel. Neatness and cleanliness were encouraged. Each monk had a needle and a handkerchief, and Tuesday was set apart for laundering.

The Rule was of great value in setting up a regular order of life and providing a standard of discipline. It combined "simplicity with completeness, strictness with gentleness, humility with courage," and gave "the whole cloister a fixed unity and compact organization." The Rule of Benedict may have been intended for the monastery of Monte Cassino alone, but it became the standard for every monastic order in Europe, although variations were frequent. Monte Cassino was sacked by the Lombards in 590, and some of the monks fled to Rome bringing the Rule with them. There it attracted the attention of Gregory the Great, who gave it his favor and urged its adoption by the autonomous foundations throughout the West. But it was not until the ninth century that its use became widespread. Charlemagne had shown an interest in monastic reform and had consulted Benedict of Aniane upon the best methods of improving existing conditions. It was obvious that no effective reform could be brought about from a central source, so long as individual monasteries pursued their own customs and followed their own rules. Charlemagne was impressed by the simplicity and practical advantages of the Benedictine system. Under his successor, Louis the Pious, and with the recommendation and co-operation of Benedict of Aniane (the *alter Benedictus*, as monkish chroniclers affectionately term him) the Rule became compulsory in all the monastic foundations under imperial control, and visitors

Clothing

*The rule becomes
"The Rule"*

*Benedict
of Aniane
the "alter
Benedictus"*

were appointed to make periodic inspections to insure that the Rule was in operation and was being obeyed. By its own merits, by the wisdom of the *alter Benedictus*, and by a capitulary of the Empire, the Rule of Benedict, "like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all others." Indeed, so common became the Rule that monks were known as "regulars," that is, followers of the Rule, to distinguish them from the ordinary or secular clergy.

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CHAPTER VI

JUSTINIAN

WHILE the West had gradually been absorbed by Vandals, Goths, and Franks, the eastern portion of the Empire withstood the barbarian onslaught and continued the title of the "Roman Empire." Constantinople confirmed the choice of its imperial founder; easily defensible by land or sea, it was admirably situated to tap the stream of commerce which flowed between Europe and Asia. But the weaknesses which characterized the pagan Empire were still present, indeed even increased, in the Christian realm. The fourth and fifth centuries had been particularly trying. Barbarian tribes menaced every frontier, and imperial diplomacy was always uncertain whether it were best to attack, subsidize, or bribe the Arabs, Persians, Huns, Avars, Slavs, or Bulgars who were stationed perilously near the borders. Serious as was the danger from external foes, it was hardly less threatening than the situation within the Empire. The provinces groaned under the weight of imperial taxation, farms were abandoned, cities deserted, and swarms of homeless unemployed drifted to the gorgeous capital to mix with other swarms of "have-nots," ready to take any advantage of an embarrassed government and to sell their obedience for free corn and public entertainment. To the disturbances of politics and economics was added that of religion. Constantine had hoped that a united Church would emerge from the Council of Nicæa. But one of his successors was a follower of Arius, the quarrel broke out afresh, and persecution and favoritism disturbed the Church and weakened the loyalty of the subject. Another Emperor, Julian the Apostate, attempted the establishment of an official and standardized paganism. This effort ended in a complete failure. Christianity returned as the official religion, but it was a sadly altered Christianity. Years of persecution, theological controversy, and doctrinal uncertainty had torn the "seamless garment" of orthodoxy, and Christianity appeared as an unsatisfactory mosaic of heretical sects.

In 518 a brave old soldier, Justin, who had left his peasant home as a young man to seek his fortune in the army, was proclaimed

Roman Emperor. His ability was limited to the camp; he was overwhelmed by the mass of official business and bewildered by the subtleties of imperial diplomacy. In his embarrassment he sought assistance and advice from his nephew, Justinian, born in 482 at Tauresium, in Macedonia. Justinian had come to Constantinople at the invitation of his uncle and there had received an excellent education which was equally suited for a Roman and a Christian. His uncle placed him in successive posts of responsibility, making him a consul in 521 and an associate in the imperial office six years later. Upon the death of Justin (527) he succeeded to the purple and ruled the Empire for over a quarter of a century.

*Justin
(518-527)*

Justinian's character is difficult to summarize, for contemporaries have either flattered or reviled him, and his reign gives evidence of both grandeur and corruption. He was unquestionably actuated by the best of intentions and desired to be "every inch a king." He was personally generous and merciful, anxious to right the wrongs of the oppressed and relieve the miseries of the downtrodden. As a Roman he desired to restore the Empire to its former extent and prosperity, and as a Christian to advance the best interests of the Church. It has been said of him that he "was less of a Byzantine than the last of the Roman Emperors." He was intensely energetic and took such an interest in the numberless details of imperial administration that he was known as "the Emperor who never sleeps." Nothing escaped him, nothing was wholly intrusted to ministers or subordinates; "the state, the law, the religion; all hung on his sovereign will." But beneath his imperial austerity Justinian hid a weak and vacillating soul, and much of the success of his reign was due to his genius or his fortune in surrounding himself with able assistants. The best known and perhaps the most important of these associates was his wife, Theodora.

*Justinian
(527-565)*

His character

This great Empress, for she was truly great, came from the humblest origins, being the daughter of a keeper of the bears at the Hippodrome in Constantinople. A born artist and natural mimic, she became the "delight and contempt" of Constantinople by the cleverness of her buffoonery and the audacity of her performances in pantomime. After some years of public notoriety she settled down to a life of comparative poverty, supporting herself by the spinning of wool. It was at this period that Justinian fell in love with her, married her, and associated her with him in the Empire "as an equal and independent colleague."

Theodora

Theodora is one of the great women of history. She was quick- *Character*

witted, strong-willed, and of undeniable intelligence; energetic, haughty, despotic, always avaricious, and sometimes revengeful. She felt strongly sympathetic for the unfortunate of her sex, a sympathy which found expression in charitable institutions and in amelioration of the laws. She exercised unlimited control over Justinian and held him to his duty when his own weaker nature threatened to nullify a policy undertaken or to endanger the imperial dignity. In 532 the capital was nearly destroyed and the government overthrown by the Nika Riot, an insurrection resulting from the conflict of the "Greens" and "Blues," two pseudo-political factions. The court was in a panic, and the Emperor, seconded by his men of State, was on the point of taking flight and abandoning the Empire to the mob. Theodora scorned such a proposal. "Those who have worn the crown," she said, "should not survive its fall; . . . Flee if you wish, Caesar; . . . As for me, I stay. I hold with the old proverb that the purple is a good winding-sheet." Her calm courage roused the court to action, and stern, violent methods of repression resulted in the slaughter of 30,000 citizens and the safety of the State. Her assistance was not, however, always of advantage, for her interferences in court intrigues often paralyzed the best efforts of administrators.

While Theodora interested herself in every department of imperial policy, others showed unusual capacity in more specialized fields. To carry out his vast military program, Justinian could rely upon the great talents of his generals, Belisarius and Narses; to procure financial support, few men were more capable than John of Cappadocia or his successor Peter Barsymes; to reduce to something approaching order the chaos of three million lines of judicial literature, there was Tribonian, a trained jurist of great capacity; and finally, to construct the crowning architectural monument of his age, the church of St Sophia, Justinian had the services of Anthemius of Tralles.

If these men acquitted themselves of their allotted tasks with efficiency or genius, the credit for the grand conceptions of the reign must go to Justinian. He longed to be a Roman Emperor in every sense of the word, and he entertained a lofty ideal of Empire. He purposed to make the power of the Emperor as absolute in fact as it was in theory; he hoped to reconcile the conflicting parties within the Church, for "good order in the Church is the prop of the Empire"; he desired to make the frontiers safe from barbarian

*Nika Riot
(532)*

*Justinian's
able
assistants*

His ambition

attack and to reconquer "the countries possessed by the ancient Romans, to the limits of the two oceans"; he planned a reform of the imperial administration in the interests of good government, involving the improvement of imperial trade and commerce; he labored to complete the work of codification left unheeded since the days of Theodosius; and he was ambitious to increase the splendor of his Empire by the construction of noble buildings.

Justinian did not merely dream these great projects, but employed, even exhausted, the resources of his Empire in his attempt to realize them. He displayed an indomitable energy (which seems to be a common possession of all the leading figures of history) and a passion for the numberless details of official routine. Nothing was so technical as to deter his interference, nothing so small as to be beneath his notice. Although he was generally easy of access, ever ready to hear appeals or to listen to complaints, and was of a personal abstemiousness which bordered upon asceticism, he emphasized the dignity of his office with the impressive machinery of elaborate ceremonial.

His energy

Justinian was not merely interested in the Church from a political standpoint, for he was something of a theologian with "a taste for religious controversy." A hymn which he composed and set to music is still sung in the Greek Church. He interfered in all kinds of ecclesiastical questions, set aside the decisions of councils, regulated Church activities, established and removed popes and bishops as though they were ordinary imperial servants. He sought to remove heresy and paganism by legislation and the exercise of force, issuing interdicts against the non-orthodox and depriving the pagans of political rights and social privileges. He sent missionaries to convert the heathen and gave a religious character to his many military demonstrations. In short, he treated the Church as an essential department of the State administration and "was the great representative of what has been called 'Cæsaro-papism.'"

His faith

The thirty-eight years of Justinian's reign were largely taken up with military activities. To defend the frontiers, the Emperor made use of the old Roman system of settling tribes upon imperial land which, in return, they promised to guard; of subsidizing others who remained beyond the boundaries; and always of playing off one people against another. But he went further. He organized a vast chain of fortresses at strategic points along the frontier and studded the interior with *castellæ* to serve as temporary refuges and per-

Military problems

manent secondary or tertiary lines of defense. Justinian's offensive program was on the same comprehensive scale. He refused to recognize the conquests made by barbarian races as valid and felt it his duty to reëstablish the former bounds of the Empire. He began with Africa.

For a century the Vandals had been in possession of that portion of North Africa which lies to the west of Egypt. But the Vandals of the sixth century were not the vigorous conquerors of the fifth. A century of contact with Roman civilization and Christianity had toned down the unregulated energy of the barbarians, while wealth offered subtler temptations than war. In addition, the Vandal domination had been weakened by religious differences (for the Vandals had remained Arians), racial resentment, and dynastic rivalry. All this was understood at Constantinople, and Justinian merely awaited the favorable moment when a party within the Vandal kingdom would be ready to assist an imperial attack. The opportunity came in 531. An ambitious Vandal, Gelimer, succeeded in establishing himself as king in the place of the legitimate Hilderic, who at once appealed to Justinian. In 533 Belisarius was sent with 15,000 troops against the usurper. Gelimer showed himself to be surprisingly weak and hesitant. A victory at Decimum led to the fall of Carthage, another at Tricamarum broke the back of Vandal resistance, and Gelimer was paraded in chains through the streets of Constantinople as tangible evidence of a revived imperialism. The native Berbers were not so quickly reduced, and it was not until 548 that the work of reconquest was satisfactorily completed. The Roman system of administration was extended to the recovered province.

Africa provided a splendid base of operations for a reconquest of Italy. In the peninsula, conditions were very similar to those in Africa. The government of Theodoric was unpopular, in part because it was Gothic, in part because it was Arian, and religious persecution had marked the last years of Theodoric's otherwise mild reign. Here again was an undercurrent of discontent which would favor imperial interference. An excuse was soon found. Amalasuntha, daughter of Theodoric, had chosen Theodahad as her associate in administering the kingdom. She was unpopular with the Goths, and an accumulation of general and private grievances led to her assassination in 535. She had previously appealed to Justinian for protection, so that her murder offered a most con-

The re-conquest of Africa

The fall of Carthage

On to Italy

The decay of the Gothic kingdom

venient pretext for intervention. Theodahad was the equal of Gelimer in incompetence and, not knowing whether to fight or mediate, put off the one until it was too late to do the other.

In 535 Belisarius with 11,000 men began the war with the Goths which was to last for twenty years and to end in the destruction of the Ostrogothic kingdom and the desolation of Italy. The first year of the war saw the conquest of Sicily. In 536 the imperial troops captured Naples and occupied Rome. The Goths found a new and able leader in Witigis, who took up a vigorous offensive and besieged Belisarius in Rome. The loyalty of the citizens saved the city and Witigis fell back upon Ravenna, which he surrendered by negotiation in 540. Belisarius was recalled for service on the Persian frontier, and the Goths renewed the war under Totila. For a time it seemed as though the work of reconquest was to be undone. Totila captured Rome and overran the greater part of the peninsula. Once again Belisarius was sent to the rescue and, despite the scantiest supplies of men and money, recaptured Rome. But again he was recalled, and Totila renewed his interrupted triumphs. Rome was captured yet again. In 552 Justinian sent the equally able Narses with a well equipped army of 30,000 men. Totila was overwhelmed at Taginæ, and the Gothic resistance was crushed under his successor, Teias, at the battle of Mons Lactaris in 553. The Gothic kingdom was destroyed, but Italy was left "half a tomb." The introduction of the Roman administrative system, which involved imperial taxation, completed the ruin of the province and smoothed the way for the Lombard conquest in 568.

Spain followed in the wake of Africa and Italy, and once more the general features are the same. The Visigoths had settled in the Iberian peninsula, after their expulsion from Gaul by the Franks, following the battle of Vouglé. Their rule was unpopular with the native population, a condition which the Arian faith of the conquerors served only to irritate. King Agila was a vigorous persecutor of Catholics, who, under the leadership of a political malcontent, Athanagild, appealed to Justinian as the recognized champion of orthodox Christians. The appeal was answered; imperial troops were sent to support Athanagild and the southeastern portion of Spain was reconquered for the Empire. With the exception of Gaul, the Mediterranean was once more a Roman lake.

Had Justinian been able to devote his whole time and resources to the reconquest of the West, the work had been quicker and bet-

Totila

*The end at
Mons Lactaris
(553)*

Spain

*The Eastern
menace*

ter done. But at all times he had to watch the Persian menace in the East, and Belisarius was twice recalled from Italy to check a Persian advance. In 532 Justinian had concluded an "Everlasting Peace" with Persia in return for an advance of 110,000 pounds of gold, to be used in strengthening the fortifications of the Caucasus. This peace lasted until the accession of Chosroes I in 540. For the next twenty-one years the two Empires were engaged in intermittent warfare, punctuated by occasional years of troubled peace. In 561 a less optimistic peace of fifty years was signed, by which Christianity was to be tolerated but not proselyted in Persia, commodities and trade routes were regulated, and the Empire was to pay an annual tribute to its Eastern rival.

These wars of Justinian's were more spectacular than permanent in value, and the military program was characteristic of a reign which was marked by a disproportion between the ends in view and the financial resources available to realize them. The number and duration of the campaigns strained to the utmost the resources of the provinces and so taxed the ingenuity of the men responsible for the revenue that the Emperor's attempts to reform the administration were checkmated by the chronic demand for funds. The army itself was a curious admixture of efficiency and insubordination. In view of the service it was expected to perform, the mobile army was surprisingly small. Chief reliance was placed upon the heavily armed cavalry, which by its very weight broke down the opposing infantry or scattered like spray the lighter cavalry of the barbarians.

The soldiers were recruited in large part from adventurers and barbarians, and, as the pay of the army was generally in arrears, the troops came to take the oath of obedience to their immediate officers with whom they bargained for terms and to whom they looked for their pay. Discipline became a phenomenon, and license to pillage relieved the embarrassment of the paymaster. The higher commands quarreled with each other or acted as spies to confirm or assuage the suspicions of the jealous Emperor. So Narses had been sent to watch Belisarius. Strangely enough, despite the fact that the Empire counted thousands of miles of coast line and that the provinces girdled the Mediterranean, little attention was given to the construction or maintenance of an imperial fleet. The Eastern Empire seemed to have lost the old Hellenic love of the sea and to have assumed the Roman indifference or dislike for maritime activities. When Belisarius set out for Africa in 533, his transporta-

*The ends are
greater than
the means*

*Military
inefficiency*

tion had to be provided by the merchants and the army did not conceal its terror of a voyage on the sea.

The military exploits of Justinian made it extremely embarrassing to carry out the administrative reforms that he had in mind. For instance, he was anxious to put an end to the corruption which was a normal feature of government practice. By imperial decree he abolished the sale of offices, increased official salaries to eliminate the temptation of misappropriation of funds, urged all officials to act paternally, instituted intermediate courts of appeal to expedite justice and reduce the expense of litigation, and, in the interest of general simplification, abolished the provincial system in favor of larger territorial units.

Justinian interested himself in the economic health of the Empire but made no important changes in the commercial system. Industry remained, as before, in the hands of exclusive corporations subject to government control. In some fields the government operated directly, as in the dye and cloth industries or the manufacture of war material; in others it exercised a monopoly, as in the mines and quarries and salt pits. Under Justinian Egypt became an economic factor of first importance. It supplied the Empire with grain, vegetables, and fruit; with indigo, balsam, papyrus, linen, flax, and cattle. Alexandria was famous for its glasswork, pottery, and porcelain, for its shipyards, its bees, and its poultry. "The importance of Egypt as a gateway for Oriental commerce dates from the time of Justinian."¹ Hardly less important in the economic balance was the silkworm. Silk found its way into the Empire through Persian middlemen, who cornered the Chinese export to Turkestan. Justinian made serious efforts to break this Persian monopoly. He tried unsuccessfully to open up a route through the Red Sea and he negotiated with the rising Turkish Empire. The Persian wars of Justinian, which did so much to hamper his western projects, were waged, in part at least, to free the silk industry of the Empire from this monopoly. In 552 two Nestorian monks smuggled some eggs of the silkworm (in bamboo canes) into the Empire and thus succeeded where war and diplomacy had been of doubtful value.

Justinian is most remembered for his legal reforms and the compilation of the *Corpus juris civilis*. No attempt had been made since the days of the Emperor Theodosius (438) to codify the vast number of imperial ordinances or to reduce to something like consistency

Attempts at reform

The economic question

Silk

Legal reforms

¹ Thompson, J. W., *Economic and Social History of the Middle Ages*, p. 164.

Tribonian
The "Corpus juris civilis"

the voluminous writings of the jurisconsults. The want of a definite code prevented the assurance of justice, gave infinite opportunities for legal quibbling, and stimulated the ingenuity of lawyers and judges to create a legal wilderness through which no one might hope to find his way. Justinian commissioned Tribonian to investigate this gigantic mass of legal literature, reconcile the inconsistencies, diminish the bulk, and define the rules of the Roman law. The *Corpus* when completed consisted of four parts. There was the Justinian Code, which contained the imperial ordinances and the writings of the jurisconsults since the days of the Emperor Hadrian. A second part, variously called the *Digest*, or *Pandects*, was a disorganized mosaic of the opinions of the jurisconsults of ancient Rome, the body of civil law, and a collection of legal questions together with their authoritative replies. The *Digest* had the merit of reducing some three million lines of literature to a more reasonable total of fifteen hundred and seven. To make these two portions of the *Corpus* of greater use to students, a textbook, called the *Institutes*, was added; and, finally, one hundred and seventy-four ordinances, modifying the code and collected under the title of *Novellæ*, completed the whole. The Justinian *Corpus* is "not the reflection of one great mind but the converging rays of the legal experience of nearly a thousand years." It is much milder than earlier codes, and here one may suspect the influence of Theodora. There is a decided effort to establish a higher standard of social justice; the laws of marriage, inheritance, and divorce are more equitable, and greater consideration is shown for women, children, and slaves. The *Corpus* gives evidence of carelessness and of hurried work, and retains many of the inconsistencies it planned to remove; but, when all criticism has been said, it remains the great monument of a great reign.

Building construction

Finally, Justinian was an enthusiastic builder. He gave much attention to public works, constructing and repairing roads and aqueducts. He built and beautified many towns and erected thousands of fortifications throughout the Empire. Most famous and splendid stand the church of San Vitale in Ravenna and the incomparable St Sophia in Constantinople. The first was constructed to celebrate the destruction of the Gothic kingdom and the triumph of Orthodoxy over Arianism in north Italy. The second was a splendid symbol of his endeavors. A gigantic central dome, with forty arched windows, was raised high above the roof and rested

upon four round arches. The dome was one hundred and seven feet in diameter and forty-six in depth, and at its topmost point was one hundred and seventy-nine feet above the floor. Turkish white-wash has failed to destroy the "almost dreamlike effect upon one who enters for the first time this sanctuary flooded with golden splendor."

Justinian's great schemes were beyond the resources of his Empire. The constant demand for money rendered ineffective the work of administrative reform. The desire to reconquer the lost provinces of the Western Empire diminished the power of defense against the more dangerous enemy to the east. The fortresses were too numerous to be garrisoned effectively by an embarrassed treasury, so that in some there was "not even a watch-dog to give the alarm." Taxes weighed heavier and heavier upon the distressed provincials, although only one-third of the amounts collected ever reached the treasury. "Nothing remained for the inhabitants but to die." Justinian overstrained the forces of the Empire, and they proved unequal to the manifold attacks from all sides encountered by his successors. Constantinople seethed with discontent even before the great Emperor died, and half a dozen times the capital had been disturbed by open riots. Three years after his death the Lombards invaded Italy and became masters of the peninsula; within a century Syria and Egypt had fallen to the Arabs and North Africa and Spain were lost shortly afterward. But through the *Corpus juris civilis* and the cathedral of St Sophia, Justinian has earned an immortality which it would be useless and unjust to begrudge.

*The vision
fades*

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CHAPTER VII

MAHOMET AND THE EXPANSION OF THE ARABS

THE rapid growth of Islam is as difficult to account for as that of Christianity, perhaps even more so; for whereas the latter built upon the foundations and enjoyed the organization and support of the Roman Empire, the former originated in a land in which there was neither recognized or recognizable central government nor any group of cultural traditions which had crystallized into institutions; and yet it succeeded in taking over no inconsiderable part of the Empire, and that three centuries after the Empire had become Christian. The new religion, like its great rival, sprang from humble origins and grew in the face of scorn and contempt. It has been much misunderstood and, in consequence, maligned.

Mahomet was born about the year 570 into the tribe of the Kuraish, which had great influence in the important market town of Mecca, especially because of the fact that it was in charge of the Kaaba, a sort of Arabian pantheon. This temple, called from its shape "the Cube," housed the shrines or images of nearly six hundred gods, for Arabia had many religions. It was not that the Arabians were polytheists, for "the desert is monotheist," but that the various tribes regarded themselves as under the protection of certain tutelary deities who were Djinns or attendants upon the One God, Allah ta-Allah. To the Kaaba at Mecca, Arabians from every part of the desert came upon periodic pilgrimages, a factor of no small importance in the prosperity of the city and the prestige of the Kuraish.

Mahomet was a posthumous child whose mother, dying soon after his birth, left him a somewhat unsatisfactory inheritance of five camels and an Ethiopean maid-servant. Tribal bonds in Arabia are strong, however, and the orphan was protected and brought to manhood by his uncle, Abu Talib, who acquitted himself of his responsibility with honor and dignity. At the age of twenty-five Mahomet entered the service of a wealthy widow, Khadija, as a

Mahomet

Khadija

sort of steward or general manager of the domestic economy. In this capacity he made several caravan journeys and proved himself so capable that Khadija offered him her hand and her fortune. Mahomet accepted and for a while experienced the comfort and economic freedom of a prosperous merchant.

Then came the great change which was to convert a trader into a prophet and a congeries of disunited tribes into one of the great empires of the world. Mahomet was naturally of a contemplative disposition with a leaning toward religious speculation. One of his wife's relatives, Waraki, was a distinguished member of a religious sect known as the Hanifs. Waraki was acquainted with the main principles of Judaism and was sufficiently familiar with Christianity to be credited with a partial translation of the New Testament. His importance seems to lie in the fact that he was an advocate of moral reform and urged the abolition of female infanticide. Mahomet was undoubtedly influenced by his teaching and, as a resident of Mecca, must also have come into contact with the numerous forms of religious observance which centered about the Kaaba. Then, too, there were many Jews in Arabia, and he may also have talked with Christians at Mecca or upon a caravan journey to Syria. Christianity found little favor in the desert, for "the proud self-reliant Arab cared little for the religion of humility or the worship of sorrow."

It was Mahomet's practice to leave his family during the month of Ramadan and retire to a cave in Mount Hera, a bleak, inhospitable rock that rose out of the desert some three miles from Mecca. It was in this cave, perhaps in the year 610, that he received the first of his revelations. The angel Gabriel spoke to him and revealed the two great tenets of the new Faith — that there was but One God, and that Mahomet was the apostle of God. Mahomet returned home, troubled and depressed, and uncertain whether his experience was a hallucination, a trick of Satan, or a genuine revelation. Khadija comforted him and convinced him that he had been truly visited by the divine messenger.

Once convinced there was no turning back, Mahomet began his career as an apostle, one for which he was well equipped. He was of a tall, imposing stature, slightly stooped, with well-trimmed beard and flashing dark eyes. He walked with long strides, "like a man going down hill." He was keenly intelligent, though men still debate the question of his ability to write. He was not a fanatic

Religious influences

The first revelation

Conversion

and made no attempt to abolish such deeply rooted social customs as did not conflict with the essentials of his system. He borrowed freely from other religions whatever he deemed of value and as readily rejected what seemed unessential or liable to abuse. He never regarded himself as divine or as other than the mouth-piece of the angel Gabriel. His whole system was based upon revelations, announced at irregular intervals, and which, without system or apparent connection, extended over the remainder of his life. Indeed, the Koran, which consists exclusively of these messages, was not compiled until after Mahomet's death, and then the passages were collected from writings on palm leaves, skins, bladebones, and "the hearts of men."

Islam's basic tenets
The Faith which Mahomet preached, and which is known as "Islam" or the Doctrine of Resignation, is simple as compared with other religions of first importance. The basic doctrine is the oneness of God:

" Say. ' He is God alone !
God the Eternal !
He begets not and is not begotten !
Nor is there any one like unto Him ! ' "

The unity of God
The unity of God was common to most Oriental religions but was apt to become obscured by the interposition of a number of sub-deities or, as with the Christians, by a cloud of martyrs, saints, and angels, to say nothing of the mystery of the Trinity. In Islam there was to be no uncertainty, no possible ambiguity; "the Koran is a glorious testimony to the unity of God." The Moslems (those who are resigned) "are the real Unitarians and the danger of idolatry was prevented by the interdiction of images." This Infinite and Eternal Being was "without form or place, without issue or similitude, existing by the necessity of his divine nature and deriving from himself all moral and intellectual perfection."¹ He manifested His existence in natural phenomena and made known His will by revelation. Mahomet was not the first, for before him God, in revealing the divine law, had selected many agents, of whom the most outstanding had been Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ. All of these had received the divine favor and as such were worthy of reverence. But none was God, and to treat Christ as the Son of God and to declare his consubstantiality with God was as blasphemous as it was absurd. This insistence upon the unity of God

¹ Gibbon, E., *Decline and Fall*, ch. 1.

was probably induced by the impressive but disconcerting spectacle of the six hundred images in the Kaaba, a spectacle which, after all, served but to emphasize their essential similarity.

The second tenet — that Mahomet is the apostle of God — was necessary to establish the validity of the first, for if Mahomet were not the apostle of God, then the “revelations” were not revelations at all, but presumptions however noble, or opinions however worthy. This is the meaning of Gibbon’s poignant phrase that Islam consists of “an eternal truth and a necessary fiction.”²

But all religions amplify a fundamental theology with a code of ethics and a system of religious observance. So, too, does Islam. And again there is simplicity. The Koran makes no provision for an elaborate ritual, a regular ceremonial, or a priesthood in charge of a sacramental system. But five times a day the Moslem is to pray with face turned toward Mecca, and the appointed times are announced by the call of the *muezzin* from a tower. In the sacred month of Ramadan no food or drink shall be taken from sunrise to sunset. No wine may be enjoyed at any time during the year, but compensation is made in Heaven for this abstention upon earth. Hospitality ceases to be a virtue and becomes a necessity among a people living close to the margin of existence, and a miser is far more contemptible than he who is guilty of manslaughter. The Koran makes charity an obligation and exacts from each of the faithful a sort of income tax to be used as alms for the poor. Cleanliness, too, becomes compulsory and ablutions with water or sand necessary preliminaries to prayer. Finally, each Moslem is expected to make an annual pilgrimage to Mecca. The Koran deals also with social conduct, and while in Western eyes the standards set up do not appear to be particularly high, the accomplishments were not without importance. A higher concept of sexual morality was evolved and fornication prohibited and penalized with the scourge. The vicious practice of female infanticide, against which Waraki had protested, was stopped. Polygamy was too deeply rooted to be abolished, but a man was henceforth expected to be satisfied with four wives, although a special dispensation was extended to the prophet. Slavery as a system continued as it had for centuries, but certain ameliorations were introduced. In a word, Mahomet showed himself a considerate advocate of social reform and without a trace of fanaticism.

Mahomet as the apostle of God

Observance

² *Loc. cit.*

Rewards

To encourage the Moslems to adhere to the new Faith and to restrain them from violating the regulations of the Koran, there was the hope of eternal bliss and the dread of everlasting torment. There was a Day of Judgment in which each must appear before God in the flesh and receive reward or punishment for his conduct upon earth. Heaven was splendidly material and quite in line with the best of the descriptions of luxurious existence in the "Arabian Nights."

This was the Faith (though it must be remembered it was not revealed as an entity) that Mahomet began to preach in Mecca, the city with the six hundred idols. There was nothing in it that was fundamentally new, and in four points at least it was in complete agreement with both Christianity and Judaism. All three depended upon the oneness of God, all three believed in Retribution, all were derived from divine authority and possessed a faith in a primeval religion as a historical foundation. But neither the Jew nor the Christian could find Islam easy to accept, the one because he had to accept Christ as a prophet, the other because he had to deny him as a God.

Years of trial

For twelve long years Mahomet struggled against scorn, contempt, and abuse, at times depressed, but impelled anew to his task by the earnestness of his faith and the constancy of his friends. Khadija was his first convert, and then gradually he had won over a slave, a wealthy merchant of calm wisdom, Abu Bakr, a fiery young fanatic, Omar, and perhaps two hundred others who have remained nameless. The inevitable condemnation of the Kaaba deities, with its probable reaction upon income derived from pilgrimages, aroused the anger of the Kuraish, and had it not been for the loyalty of Abu Talib (who never became a Moslem) and the dangers of a blood feud, Mahomet in all likelihood would have been put to death. As it was, those of his followers who had no powerful relatives to protect them were compelled to flee the city and many found refuge in Abyssinia. Once, in despair, Mahomet left Mecca and went to Taif, but he was not received and was driven thence with mocking. Then Khadija and Abu Talib died, she who had been the first to believe in him and he whose splendid loyalty had protected him throughout those troubled years. These years of trial show Mahomet at his best; he makes a noble figure "struggling against universal obloquy, single against a nation, undaunted by defeat, holding by the truth after years of fruitless toil."

This might have been the end of it all but for the men of Yathrib, which lay some two hundred miles to the north of Mecca. Tribal dissension had made life unendurable in Yathrib, and the people yearned for someone who would restore peace. Pilgrims from Yathrib to Mecca in 620 had met Mahomet and, impressed by his presence or his faith, had told of him when they returned home. The leading citizens felt that this might be the very man for whom they were seeking, for they did not want a despot but an arbiter and a healer of faction. There was enough of Judaism in Islam, they thought, to attract the Jews, and the fact that Mahomet spoke with divine authority would give added sanction to his decrees. A delegation went to Mecca and proposed to Mahomet that he come to Yathrib, where they guaranteed he would find protection and support. It was not an offer to refuse. Mahomet urged his followers to make their way to Yathrib, when and as they could with safety. The prophet himself, with the faithful Abu Bakr, escaped from Mecca in the summer or early autumn of 622 and with great peril reached Yathrib. There is an anecdote connected with this flight which reveals the strength of Mahomet's faith. The prophet and Abu Bakr had taken refuge in a cave, closely followed by their enemies. Abu Bakr lost heart and said, "There is no hope, for we are but two." "No," said Mahomet, "we are three, for God is with us."

This flight, known as the *Hijra* (Hegira), not only marks the second turning point in the career of Mahomet, but it has become the starting point of the Moslem calendar, while even Yathrib changed its name to Medina, that is, "The City (of the Prophet)." For a few months life at Medina was very difficult. The Jews, whom Mahomet reckoned as possible converts, rejected Islam. Both money and food were scarce. An absence of individuality, which manifests itself in a want of energy and a tendency toward fatalism, lies at the base of the Eastern character. To overcome this, to give Islam, as such, a directive energy, and to keep the spirit of religion in constant activity, and, above all, to procure immediate supplies for his distressed followers, Mahomet gave license to the use of force. The caravans from Syria to Mecca followed a route which passed a point but three days' journey from Medina. Here, foraging bands of Moslems lay in wait to plunder whatever passed that way. Their enthusiasm grew with their success, so that the merchants of Mecca were forced to take steps to crush this menace to their wealth.

In 624 a particularly rich caravan was on the way, and to prevent

*The call from
Yathrib
(Medina)*

*The Hegira
(622)*

*Islam grows
militant*

its interception by the Moslems Mecca dispatched a body of one thousand fighting men to act as an escort. At Bâdr three hundred Moslems were anticipating an easy raid. Here the two forces met. Inexcusable hesitancy, together with foolish tactics on the part of the Meccan convoy, advantage of ground, personal bravery — and the assistance of Gabriel with some three thousand angels — gave the victory to Islam. The success at Bâdr was regarded by the Moslems as a certain sign of the divine favor, and Mahomet acquired a prestige which even a setback at Uhud in the following year did little to diminish. In 627 the Meccans laid siege to Medina, but they were unable to overcome the simple defensive obstacle of a trench and a mound which Mahomet had thrown across an open approach to the city.

Three years later the prophet moved against Mecca with a strong force of ten thousand men recruited from many tribes, attracted by his growing reputation and an individual desire for profit. The city surrendered upon the promise of peaceful occupation and the destruction of all the Kaaba shrines with the exception of the famous black stone embedded in its wall. A relief expedition of Bedouin tribes was overwhelmed in the valley of Hunain. Taif submitted to Mahomet before the end of the same year. He who had left Mecca an outcast eight years before returned a conqueror and the most powerful man in Arabia. In 632 he died.

The world will probably never find a satisfactory solution to the problem of Mahomet's sincerity. To one he was a prophet, genuinely inspired; to another, a mere impostor; to a third, a "spiritual abortion with tendencies to piety"; to a fourth, a man of delusions. He has been diagnosed as a victim of *hysteria muscularis* on the grounds that he had fits, fell senseless, got red in the face, or "snored like a camel." Or if that would not do, then he suffered from *hysteria cephalica* because he had pains in the head, oppression, illusions, and fancies. There is danger in posthumous psychology. Mahomet seems to have been too little of a fanatic, too clear in judgment, too sane in action to have been a victim of hysteria of any kind, and possessed of too much moral earnestness to have been an impostor. As a result of his work Arabia acquired under his successors a unity of politics and religion which had previously been entirely lacking; the spirit of Islam gave it a driving power and a slogan which carried Arabian civilization to the Himalayas and the Atlantic.

*The battle
of Bâdr*

*Siege of
Medina*

*Capture of
Mecca*

*Mahomet's
sincerity*

The real expansion of the Arabians was accomplished after Mahomet's death, but a century had not rolled by before Islam was professed in Persia and in Spain. But at first it seemed as though the power which Mahomet had constructed would fall away as rapidly as it had grown. He had made no provision for a successor, and a crisis arose immediately upon the news of his death. A hurriedly called meeting of the earliest converts recognized the value of tactful leadership and elected Abu Bakr, Mahomet's oldest and most trusted friend, as his caliph or "representative." Despite the disappointment of Mahomet's son-in-law, Ali, the choice was a wise one, for Abu Bakr was respected for his mild wisdom and honored for his loyalty. He lived but two years after his elevation, but these two years were critical in the history of Islam. Many of the tribes which had rallied round Mahomet in the days of success now tried to break away, and a great secession movement, known as the Ridda, threatened the very existence of Islam. The movement was only in part a religious one, the real motive being to prevent Medina from establishing a political supremacy over Arabia. The opposition of the Ridda was unquestionably serious, but it was weakened by a lack of coöperation between the various secession groups and succumbed to the brilliant military genius of Khalid after a year of hard fighting. It was not safe to disband the victorious army; lest the rebellion break out anew, but neither was it wise to keep the troops inactive. Therefore, to provide employment for an army created for domestic crises, the Medinese government (for politics was already beginning to overshadow religion) committed itself to a military program.

Opportunity came from an unexpected quarter. Along the Syrian border a number of Bedouin tribes, mostly Christian, had served the Emperor Heraclius as auxiliaries and had received an annual subsidy as a sort of retaining fee. Economic difficulties induced the Emperor to suspend this payment, and what had happened so often before in imperial history once more occurred. The outraged tribes decided to compensate themselves by plunder. So it came about that Christian Arabs called upon Medina for assistance in a foraging expedition against Syria. The victorious Khalid was sent with a small force. The raid was eminently successful, and a battle fought at Jannabatain (634) opened the way for the conquest of Palestine.

Abu Bakr died in 634 and was succeeded by the warlike Omar, who held the caliphate for ten years and assumed the title of "Com-

*Expansion of
Islam under
Abu Bakr*

The Ridda

The conquests under Omar mander of the Faithful." Under him the Arabs made a brilliant series of conquests. In the West, Damascus was taken in 635 with the assistance of the treason of the Christian bishop. An imperial army sent to expel the invaders was overwhelmed on the Yarmuk (636), and both Syria and Palestine were lost to the Empire. Jerusalem was occupied in 638 and Cæsarea in 640. Egypt was the next objective. This province was highly desirable both as a source of corn supplies and as a naval base, whether to defend the newly conquered Syria and Palestine or to attack the Empire. Egypt could offer little serious resistance, for the people were torn apart by religious dissension and groaned under the administrative tyranny of Cyrus, an erstwhile bishop. The first invasion was made in 639. In the following year the Arabs occupied Heliopolis, captured Babylon in 641, and received the surrender of Alexandria (642) on conditions of religious toleration and respect of private property. While victory followed victory to the west, the Arabs were equally successful in the east. The capture of Ctesiphon (637) meant the possession of Persia (Irak). To link Persia and Syria, Mesopotamia was overrun and its conquest completed by the capitulation of Mosul (641).

Succession difficulties Omar died in 644, leaving the choice of a successor to an Electoral Board. This board tried to keep the real power in its own hands by naming as caliph a certain Othman, a man of known weakness of character whose policy they hoped to direct. But Othman came from a distinguished and aristocratic Meccan family, the Umayyads, who were quick to grasp the situation. Othman was prevailed upon to fill the important offices of State with his relatives. He was murdered in 655. His successor was Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet by his marriage with Fatima, the daughter of the prophet. Ali's caliphate is important for two things. In the first place, he moved the capital of Islam from Medina to Kufa (Irak) with the result that "The City" fell back into comparative obscurity. In the second, he had to face a rebellion of the Umayyads, who were loath to lose the power they had wielded under Othman. Irak and Syria were now divided and a bitter hostility was aroused which lasted for centuries. Upon Ali's assassination in 661 the Umayyads set up a caliph at Damascus and established a dynasty which lasted for all but ninety years, until it was overthrown (750) by the party of Ali, which had become dominant in Irak under the name of the "Abbasids."

Palestine

Egypt

Umayyads

Fatimites

Under the Umayyads (661-750) the Arabian Empire reached its greatest extent and began that brilliant civilization which expressed itself in building, art, poetry, and science. Under the Caliph Walid (705-715) the Arabs conquered Spain and pushed eastward to the very borders of China. For our purpose it will be sufficient to outline the western advance.

From east to west

After the conquest of Egypt the Arabs had made irregular incursions into North Africa, and by 647 had pushed as far westward as Tripolis. The disturbances of domestic politics under Othman and Ali postponed further aggression until the advent of the Umayyads. The great difficulty in the conquest of Africa was to win over the Berbers, who remained "like the palm-trees and the sand" after the Carthaginian and Roman Empires had come and passed away. Once the Berbers were convinced that their interests lay rather with the Arabs than with the Byzantines, the rest was easy. Carthage fell in 697, and to satisfy the desire of the Berbers for booty the conquest of Spain was undertaken, a task which would have been impossible but for the factional strife which disunited the Gothic kingdom and the support given by the Jews who welcomed the invaders as liberators from Christian persecution. In 711 Tarik crossed the strait with 12,000 men and won a decisive victory at Wadi Bekka. Cordova and Toledo fell because of treachery within the walls. By 718 the Pyrenees were crossed and the Arabs had reached Gaul.

North Africa

Spain

It may have been noticed that the word "Arab" has been substituted throughout this brief survey of conquest. This has been done to dispel, so far as is possible, the popular belief that these expeditions were religious wars with conversions made upon unwilling subjects at the point of the sword. Nothing seems to be further from the truth. "The acceptance of Islam by others than Arabians was not only not striven for, but was in fact regarded with disfavour."³ The reason for this apparent exclusiveness is not far to seek. The distinction between Islam and the "State of Medina" as a political institution was difficult, if not impossible, to make. The subject of the State and the member of the Faith were, or should be, one and the same thing. When the period of expansion began and non-Arabians were brought under the control of the government of Medina, they were offered the choice between conversion to Islam (in which event they became politically indistinguishable

Absence of religious persecution

³ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, II, p. 330, and ch. xi, *passim* for this whole section.

from Arabians) and of retaining their own Faith upon payment of tribute.

This worked very well in the early days, for the State was thereby financed by the conquered and the Arabians escaped the inconveniences of taxation. But this ideal situation did not long endure and collapsed when great areas of conquered land were incorporated into the Empire. Men of all creeds found that they could reconcile themselves to Islam. But every convert meant a loss of revenue, and so many joined the Moslem ranks that the entire financial system had to be reorganized. A tax was levied upon all landowners, whether Arabian or not, and only a poll or capitation tax distinguished the non-Moslem from one of the faithful. While there were, doubtless, men of zeal who proselyted for Islam, conversions as a general policy were discouraged.

The expansion of the Arabs was a political expansion, "part of the last great Semitic migration connected with the economic decline of Arabia." "Islam was simply a change in the watchword for which they fought," and its importance "lies in its masked political character."

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CHAPTER VIII

THE RISE OF THE PAPACY

THE domination which Christianity exercised over the life and thought of Europe throughout the Middle Ages was due, in no small degree, to the supremacy acquired by the Bishop of Rome over all religious orders and spiritual dignitaries in the West. This almost monarchical position was of historic evolution and was based upon no direct authority of the Scriptures or the practice, or even the theory, of the primitive Church. It was inevitable, however, that the head of the Christian community in a city glorified by political tradition and sanctified by religious persecution should enjoy a position of eminence. “The largest and most famous city of the world, the historic seat of universal dominion, hallowed with the blood of countless martyrs, and with the traditional residence, sufferings, and death of two of the chiefest apostles, was invested with a separate dignity and authority which served as a basis for all future usurpations.”¹ The development of this eminence into preëminence depended in part upon circumstances and in part upon individual effort.

There was an old comfortable syllogism which ran: “Every visible body must have a single visible head; the Church is a visible body; therefore the Church must have a single visible head.” This may or may not be good logic, but it was undoubtedly good common sense in the days when the Church was beset by pagans without and heretics within. At the opening of the second century Ignatius of Antioch recommended a strong head in the churches, to “meet the trials of the times and to stand as the representative of Christ,” an opinion which was seconded by St Cyprian in the third century and by Optatus of Milevi in the fourth. Although the principle was recognized, no church was suggested for the exalted position.

Several churches boasted an apostolic foundation: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and Thessalonica. In point of antiquity Jerusalem was unquestionably the seat of the oldest Christian community, but its destruction in the year 70 left it with little more than an honorary significance. Corinth, Ephesus,

The importance of Rome

“A visible body needs a visible head”

Possible claimants to the headship of the Church

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, CXII, p. 106.

and Thessalonica were not cities of importance. There were left Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. The Council of Nicaea (325) mentioned these three churches as occupying positions of honor in the Christian world, but with no indication of any individual supremacy. Five years after this council, when Constantinople became the new capital of the Empire, its church at once assumed a position corresponding to the political importance of the city, overshadowing both Antioch and Alexandria and standing out as the one serious rival to Rome's spiritual ascendancy.

The Council of Constantinople, held in 381, revealed the altered position of the chief churches by granting precedence in honor to the patriarch of Constantinople next after the Bishop of Rome. The year 395 saw the Empire divided between Arcadius and Honorius, a partition which freed Rome from political subjection to its religious rival and emphasized the importance of Rome in the West. The separation between Rome and Constantinople constantly widened; Rome became more and more positive in her claims of spiritual ascendancy and succeeded in obtaining recognition of these claims from the churches of the West. Constantinople as persistently resisted, with the result that while Rome was dominant in the West and Constantinople never succeeded in establishing a spiritual monarchy, nevertheless, the Eastern Church followed her, and Catholicism was divided into two great bodies which have remained independent to this day.

There are many reasons which might be suggested why Rome succeeded in her endeavor to become the mistress of the Church. She enjoyed the advantage of geographical location. Rome was the only apostolic see (always a guarantee of dignity) in the western portion of the Empire and stood without a rival in size or in the importance which a glorious tradition gives. The great distance from Constantinople, the fact that the emperors of the West (whether Roman, Frank, or German) maintained their capitals elsewhere, and that no barbarian king ever resided in the "Eternal City" freed the Bishop of Rome from immediate imperial or royal interference and gave opportunity for the assumption of political powers denied to the patriarch of Constantinople.

The Bishop of Rome exercised political authority for a radius of one hundred miles, and increased his importance by a union of political and religious functions. The bishop became the convenient agent of a harassed government, but the decline and fall of the Western

*The arguments
in favor of
Rome*

Empire, the remoteness of Constantinople, and the constant demands upon the imperial officials by the wars of defense against the barbarians enabled him to act as an almost independent ruler. He supervised the collection of taxes, assisted in the administration of justice, repaired and maintained the walls, and superintended the care of the poor and the sick, so that the Roman Church appeared "like the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire."

More important than political status was the religious position of the Roman bishop. The Council of Nicæa had failed to put an end to theological discussion. The Christian East was constantly disturbed by new doctrines, enthusiastically espoused and as vigorously combated. Arians, semi-Arians, Nestorians, Monophysites, or Monothelites had their champions in one or the other of the great Eastern churches. Councils summoned to approve or condemn these new tenets now confirmed the opinion of the church of Alexandria, now that of Antioch, or again that of Constantinople. None could claim that they had never held views subsequently condemned by a council. None, that is to say, but Rome! At every council her representatives had been on the winning side. The Roman temperament never delighted in philosophic abstractions, nor did the Latin tongue lend itself to those confusing shades of meaning for which the Greek was preëminently suited. "To be ignorant of Greek was to be innocent of heresy." Rome emerged from these conciliar trials with a reputation for unshaken orthodoxy which made her a natural court of appeal in cases of local uncertainty. So Antioch petitioned Rome for a solution to a perplexing problem; so the local Council of Sardica selected Julius of Rome as arbiter in the cases of deposed bishops; so Siricius received the appeal of disputants from Spain.

But Rome buttressed this reputation for sound doctrine by a claim of the right to interfere with final power in all questions of disputed faith. Justification for this claim could perhaps be found in the need of the growing Western Church for the unity which could only be obtained by regulations and an accepted tradition. Here again, Rome's unique position as an apostolic foundation stood her in good stead. Early success led to a growing confidence and an attitude of positiveness which admitted no denial. She assumed the powers of a Court of First Instance — Victor (193?–202) laid down the rules for the observance of the Easter Festival — Callistus (219–223) ordered the restoration into the Church of those who had "lapsed" during the persecutions — Stephen (253–257) regulated procedure in

*Rome's
consistent
orthodoxy*

*Rome insists
on her
preëminence*

cases of heretical baptism — Damasus (366–384) authorized Jerome's translation of the Bible — Innocent (402–417) declared that nothing was to be decided without the cognizance of Rome and that in matters of faith all bishops should conform to the doctrines held by the Roman bishop.

The definition of doctrine in particular instances was but one part of a policy of expanding aggressiveness. In a wider range of activities Roman bishops issued decretals, which they held to be binding upon all Christians, and pastoral letters for the guidance of the clergy in matters both of discipline and faith. They called councils (as that of Arles in 314), an action which in itself implied an administrative superiority; they summoned bishops to Rome to defend their conduct or opinions; they issued a canon, or official list, of sacred books and a code of discipline for uniform observance. They followed up their decisions in matters of faith by employing such spiritual sanctions or penalties as, they claimed, lay within their power. Both Victor and Stephen used the dreaded weapon of excommunication (the denial to an individual of all association with his fellow Christians and of participation in the spiritual benefits of the Church) against those who obstinately refused to obey.

The basis for these extensive claims rested not upon the recognized importance of the city of Rome as the seat of ancient grandeur and the birthplace of Western Christendom, but upon a theory! The theory was based upon three propositions. First, that the words of Christ to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (*petra* = rock) I will build my Church. . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew xvi, 18–19), were to be interpreted as meaning that to Peter was given an absolute control over the Church of Christ and an unlimited authority over all adherents to the Christian Faith. Secondly, that Peter was the founder of the church at Rome and honored that city above all others by electing it as his place of martyrdom. Thirdly, that Peter transmitted his office as vicar of Christ and head of the Church to Linus, Bishop of Rome, from whom it passed to his successors.²

The theory was of slow growth. No direct Scriptural authority existed for Peter's presence at Rome, but there was less authority

The Petrine theory

Its Growth

² See Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, for a full development of this theory.

for denying it. Two passages in the New Testament have been cited as evidence. Peter closed his First General Letter to the Eastern Churches with the words: "the church that is at Babylon (Rome?) saluteth you" (I Peter v. 13), implying that the letter was directed thence. Paul apologized to the Romans for not having come to them as yet lest he should "build upon another man's (Peter's?) foundation." But the tradition was strong; it dates from the generation following the apostle's death and appears in writing before the close of the first century in a letter of Clement to the church at Corinth. Ignatius of Antioch and Origen both confirmed the tradition early in the second century and were followed by Irenæus, who added: "The blessed apostles (Peter and Paul) then founded and reared up this church (Rome) and afterwards committed unto Linus the office of the episcopate."

From such beginnings was evolved the theory that the Pope, i.e., the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of St Peter had "not merely an office of inspection or direction, but a full, supreme, ordinary, and immediate jurisdiction over all churches, all pastors, and all the faithful." The theory found its complete and definite expression in the writings of Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome from 440 to 461, which may be thus summarized: "On Peter rests the steadfastness of the whole apostolic college in the faith. To him the Lord, after His resurrection, committed the care of His sheep and lambs. Peter is therefore the pastor and prince of the whole Church, through whom Christ exercises His universal dominion upon earth. This primacy, however, is not limited to the apostolic age, but, like the faith of Peter, and like the Church herself, it perpetuates itself through the bishops of Rome, who are related to Peter as Peter was related to Christ. . . . It was by special direction of divine Providence, that Peter labored and died in Rome, and sleeps with thousands of blessed martyrs in holy ground. . . . By Peter was Rome, which had been the center of all error and superstition, transformed into the metropolis of the Christian world, and invested with a spiritual dominion far wider than her former earthly Empire. . . . The Roman bishop is, therefore, the first of all bishops (*primus omnium episcoporum*) and on him devolves the fulness of power (*plenitudo potestatis*), the care of all pastors (*sollicitudo omnium pastorum*), and the common care of the universal Church (*communis cura universalis ecclesiae*)."³

and development

Leo I
(440-461)

³ Vide Schaff, P., *History of the Christian Church*, (New York, 1893), III, pp. 317-318 and ch. v, §§ 60-64.

His work

The outstanding character of Leo among the men of the fifth century gave added weight to the Petrine theory as he had expressed it. He was not only a great theologian, whose book, the *Tome*, ended the Eutychian heresy, but he was a great man. He won and held the favor of the young Emperor Valentinian III, who by official decree ordered all bishops to obey the commands of the Bishop of Rome. It was Leo who headed a delegation which successfully dissuaded Attila from his threatened advance upon Rome, and it was Leo who, by negotiation, saved the city from destruction (if not from pillage) and the inhabitants from slaughter (if not from loss) when Genseric and his Vandals spent their mad fortnight in Rome.

Four evil generations

For the next one hundred and thirty years men of very secondary worth occupied the chair of Peter. In 476 the Western Empire became extinct, and Rome fell under the control of the distant emperors at Constantinople, who ruled over such parts of Italy as had not fallen to the Ostrogoths. The sixth century was humiliating for the papacy and disastrous for Rome. The great Justinian, Emperor and theologian, treated the bishops of Rome in the same way that he dealt with the bishops of the East. He appointed and dismissed at pleasure, summoned them to his court, and bent them to subscribe his opinions by threatened or actual violence, imprisonment, or exile. If the papacy was thus reduced to subjection, Rome itself was nearly destroyed. Justinian's attempt to reconquer Italy for the Empire required twenty years of warfare, in which Rome was captured and recaptured, now by the imperial troops under Belisarius or Narses, now by the Goths under Witigis or Totila. War, pestilence, famine, or flight swept away the population, and food for the garrison was grown on the open spaces within the walls.

The Lombards

In 568, three years after the death of Justinian, the Arian Lombards entered a desolated Italy almost without opposition. The rich lands of the Po valley fell to them; they established a capital at Pavia, while detached bands pushed southward and founded independent duchies at Spoleto and Benevento. To the Empire there remained the southern portion of the peninsula, Rome, and a narrow corridor running northeast to Ravenna, where an exarch was stationed as the military and administrative agent for Italy while Rome was under the control of a *praefectus urbis*. The Lombard conquest freed the Bishop of Rome from that immediate supervision by Constantinople which had been so humiliating under Justinian, but it surrounded him with other dangers scarcely less serious. In the

dark century following the death of Leo only one advance of note was made in the *idea* of papal supremacy. Gelasius I (492-496) declared that the office of priest was above that of king or emperor and that from the decisions of the successor of Peter there was no appeal.

The Lombards continued to advance with the object of connecting their kingdom in the north with the southern duchies of Spoleto and Benevento and of uniting Italy under a single authority. In the way stood the imperial territories and the Church lands under the control of the Roman bishop. Into the intricate problem of the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, a question not yet completely solved, it is not necessary to venture. It is evident, however, that in the sixth century the Bishop of Rome had extensive territories under his immediate control. These possessions probably originated when the pagan Constantine (c. 325) granted to the Bishop of Rome certain estates in the Campagna and the Alban Hills which were part of the old imperial patrimony. These properties had in time been greatly increased by the gifts of the devout in all parts of Italy, especially in the south and in Sicily. The Lombard attack was, therefore, a twofold menace, since as Arians they would have little sympathy with, and give little support to, the Petrine theory of papal supremacy, and as conquerors they would not feel obliged to respect the donations of Roman emperors or the gifts of the faithful.

*Territorial
possessions
of the
Bishop of
Rome*

At this crisis, the second great figure in papal history appears in the person of Gregory the Great. Gregory was born about 540, of a wealthy family distinguished not only by its noble Roman blood but by its devotion to the Church. He had received the usual education of one of his rank, to which he had added the study of law. While still a young man he was made prefect, or chief magistrate, of Rome. This office comprised not only judicial duties but involved such administrative functions as the care of the water and food supply and the general municipal welfare. He soon wearied of this important and honored post, put aside his gorgeous robes of jeweled silk, and assumed the homely garb of the Benedictine monk, devoting his private wealth to the construction of six monasteries in Sicily and one in Rome.

*Gregory I
(590-604)*

The peace which Gregory sought to find in the cloister was of short duration. He had shown administrative abilities as prefect which did not allow him to be forgotten. In 579 he was sent to Constantinople on a papal mission and resided in the Eastern capital

*In Constan-
tinople*

for six years, during which time he did not fail to recognize the dependence of the patriarch of Constantinople upon the Emperor and to realize the advantage which distance gave to Rome. Upon his return he was elevated to the papacy, an office which he held for fourteen years (590-604).

His pontificate began at a time of great public distress. Rome had just suffered severely from floods, and the feverish terror of the citizens had seen enormous serpents or dragons on the swollen waters of the Tiber. Pestilence followed, and Gregory, to calm the panic of the people and to intercede with Heaven, organized a penitential procession. For three days the stricken populace, lay and cleric, men and women, monks and nuns, in solemn garb moved slowly through the streets, from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore to St Peter's, until the archangel Michael is said to have appeared with flaming sword above the Tomb of Hadrian (now St Angelo) as a sign that the divine wrath was appeased and a promise that the pestilence would end.

Italy was hardly in better plight than Rome. "The cities are depopulated," writes Gregory, "the towns destroyed, the churches burned and the monasteries in ruins; the fields are desolate and there is none to till them. The farms lie waste and untenanted, and wild beasts make their dens where once so many people dwelt." Gregory took up the conflict with the Lombards with all vigor. Deprived of adequate military forces and unable to rely upon assistance from the Emperor at Constantinople or his exarch at Ravenna, he fell back upon the only two means at his disposal, diplomacy and gold. He showed himself conciliatory and tactful, ever ready to meet the Lombard leaders halfway, and he procured temporary relief from attack by the purchase of treaties.

His main business, however, was with the Church, and it was as the Bishop of Rome that he revealed his true greatness and did so much to enhance the power of the Pope in the eyes of Christendom. He wrote fourteen books of letters upon all subjects to all manner of persons. He wrote a *Commentary on the Book of Job*, the *Moralia*, which was widely read and enjoyed, and a book of *Dialogues* which consisted of stories abounding in magic and demons and miracles, for the comfort and edification of the good Christian and the uneasiness and repentance of the bad. Most important by far was his *Pastoral Care*, or book of instructions for parish priests. Intended originally, perhaps, for the priests under his own jurisdic-

tion, it spread rapidly throughout Europe, was later translated by King Alfred into Anglo-Saxon, and became the standard guide for priests during the Middle Ages. That it came from the Bishop of Rome was of no small importance in supporting the claims of the papacy to be mistress of the Church.

In the sphere of religious observance he was even more influential. "He knew the value of solemn and pompous rites to soothe the distress, confirm the faith and dispel the dark enthusiasm of the vulgar." To him is attributed the selection and arrangement of those solemn Gregorian chants which are to be heard everywhere in the Catholic Liturgy with the exception of the archdiocese of Milan. "He arranged the calendar of festivals" celebrated by the Church; and "the order of processions; the service of the priests and deacons; the variety and change of sacerdotal garments."⁴

His interests went beyond the spiritual welfare of those who were within the Church to men and nations destined to damnation while they remained in paganism. "Thy negligence," he wrote to a bishop in Sardinia, "has allowed the peasants belonging to the Church to remain up to the present in heathenism. . . . Should I succeed in finding a pagan peasant belonging to any bishop whatever in the island of Sardinia, I will visit it severely on that bishop . . . , but if any peasant be found so perfidious and obstinate as to refuse to come to the Lord God, he must be weighted with so great a burden of taxes as to be compelled by the very pain of the exaction to hasten to the right way."⁵ Conversely, Jews were to be enticed by a promise of tax reduction. He justified this program on the grounds that if the original converts were not sincere their children would be. He carried the work of conversion into Spain and, above all, into England, whither he sent the monk Augustine with some forty companions to win a victory for Rome "greater than Cæsar's with his six legions."

Gregory supervised the financial interests of the Church with equal care. "He watched the market and sold timber to Egypt, corn to Constantinople, . . . olives and oil everywhere." "We have ascertained," he wrote his agent in Sicily, "that the peasants of the Church are exceedingly grieved over the prices of wheat, in that the sum appointed for them to pay is not kept in due proportion in times of plenty. It is our will that in all times, whether the crops be more or less abundant, the measure of proportion be

*Religious
observance*

*Missionary
activity*

Economy

⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xlv. ⁵ Quoted in Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

according to the market-price. Corn that is lost by shipwreck must be fully accounted for; but on condition that there shall be no neglect on thy part in shipping it. . . . It is very hard for us to spend 60 solidi on herdsmen and not get back 60 pence from the herds. . . . You have sent us a miserable horse and five good donkeys. The horse I cannot ride because he is miserable, nor the donkeys because they are donkeys.”⁶

Gregory never put forth in writing such overweening claims as those of Leo the Great, but he had, none the less, the highest regard for the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome. He announced his election to the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem as though the Church were still under the rule of the five patriarchs. But he severely reprimanded John of Constantinople for assuming the title of “Universal Bishop” and charged him with being “in his pride, a fore-runner of Antichrist.” For himself he chose the humbler designation of “the servant of the servants of God,” a custom followed by all of his successors. Yet he did say: “I know of no bishop who is not subject to the Apostolic See, *when a fault has been committed*,” and he brought a Dalmatian bishop to confess that he had “sinned against God and the blessed Pope Gregory.”

“It is as a Roman and a Roman bishop that Gregory fills the great place he holds in the history of the Middle Ages. He was a Roman of the Romans, nurtured on traditions of Rome’s imperial greatness, cherishing the memories of pacification and justice, of control and protection. And these, which belonged to ‘the Republic,’ he was eager to transfer to the Church. Vague were the claims which the Roman bishops had already put forth in regard to the universal Church. But what all bishops held as inherent in their office, the right of giving advice and administration, was held by the Roman pontiffs to belong especially to the see which was founded in the imperial city. There was a prerogative of the Roman bishop as of the Roman emperor, and already the one was believed to run parallel to the other. The Pope directly superintended a large part of the Christian world: everywhere he could reprove and exhort with authority, though the authority was often contested. And Gregory’s exercise of this power was one of the great moments in the world’s history. To the practical assertions of his predecessors he gave a new moral weight, and it was that which carried the claims to victory. Well

⁶ Quoted in Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

has it been said by Dean Church, that 'he so administered the vast undefined powers supposed to be inherent in his see, that they appeared to be indispensable to the order, the good government and the hopes, not of the Church only, but of society.' And the success was due not so much to the extent of her claims or the weakness of his competitors, but to the moral force which flowed from his life of intellectual, moral and spiritual power."⁷

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⁷ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, II, p. 251.

CHAPTER IX

THE FRANKS AND CHARLEMAGNE

*The rise of
Charles
Martel*FOR a year or two after the death of Pepin of Heristal, in 714, something of the old confusion reigned in Gaul. The magnates of Austrasia and Neustria attempted to control the country in the name of his two grandsons. But Pepin's illegitimate son, Charles, was very much alive, though he had been imprisoned at Cologne by his stepmother, Plectrude, the widow of Pepin, to clear the way for her own grandchildren. In 715 this injured man, to be known in history as Charles Martel (the Hammer), escaped from confinement, and gathering about him a host of followers, ever ready to fish in troubled waters, took vigorous measures to succeed his father as *major domus* of Austrasia. Two years sufficed to make him undisputed master of Neustria and Austrasia and to restore something like unity. Campaigns against the Alemanni, Bavarians, and Saxons were undertaken with a success which strengthened his position and enhanced his growing reputation as a warrior.

So far Charles had achieved no more than any ambitious and competent man might have done in his place. His activities had been local, in the sense that they were restricted to acquiring and maintaining his position as the actual, if not nominal, ruler of the Franks. But in 732 an opportunity was presented to this *major domus* such as no other mayor of the palace or Frankish king had received.

*Cross versus
Crescent*In 711 the armies of Islam under Tarik crossed from Africa into Spain, at the spot whose name perpetuates the event, for Gibraltar is Tarik's Rock (*Gebel Tarik*). By 714 the peninsula was in their hands; by 720 the Pyrenees were crossed and the Saracens were at Narbonne; the cities of Tours, Nîmes, Carcassonne, and Autun, and the valleys of the Rhône and Saône endured the horrors of siege and the miseries of pillage. The Crescent was gaining on the Cross! Only Aquitaine lay between the victorious Moslems and the land controlled directly by the Franks; and Aquitaine, though nominally subject to the Merovingians, was a thoroughly unreliable dependent.

This country was administered by Eudes, who precipitated a Saracen attack upon his own territory as the result of a policy of unusual shortsightedness. To complete his independence he had bargained for the services of a Saracen emir, who was the active opponent of Abd-ar-Rahman, military and administrative head of Spain. Eudes had hoped for Saracen support; he brought on a Saracen invasion — for Abd-ar-Rahman crossed the Pyrenees at the head of his “Invincibles” to punish his unworthy emir and his Christian abettor. Eudes, faced with the certainty of disaster if he attempted to stem the Moslem tide unaided, sent a frantic appeal to the one man who might save him, the *major domus* of the Franks. Charles at once complied, either from a desire to serve “God who loves the Franks” or because he felt that the best way to protect the land under his immediate control was to save Aquitaine. The Frankish army advanced across the Loire and in the neighborhood of Tours met the forces of Abd-ar-Rahman (732). The warriors of the North met the whirlwind cavalry charges of the Saracens with the solidity of “a wall frozen with the cold,” Abd-ar-Rahman withdrew his forces under the cover of night, and Charles Martel was hailed as the savior of Christendom.

This battle of Tours has been included among the decisive battles of the world. It would be idle to deny its great importance. But Christian enthusiasm has allowed other facts to remain obscured. Abd-ar-Rahman had been checked in his advance but he had withdrawn in good order. That he did not renew the northern campaign was due to an uprising of utmost seriousness among the Berbers of the Mogreb, a revolt which threatened to sever the communications between Cadiz and Bagdad and transform Spain from a frontier into an enclave. Again, the battle did not free France either from Saracen occupation or invasion. The Moslems remained in Provence and Septimania, and in 739, greatly reënforced from Spain, they invaded France in such strength that Charles called upon Liutprand, the Lombard king, to aid in the defense of Gaul. It is the failure of this latter invasion rather than the battle of Tours which put an end to Saracen threats on a large scale. In the minds of contemporaries, however, the battle marked the triumph of the Cross over the Crescent, and Rome rated Tours with Vouglé in reckoning the services of the Franks to the Church.

Charles Martel had not been idle these seven years. Successive campaigns into Burgundy (733), Aquitaine (735), and Provence

The battle of Tours (732)

Its influence

*The activities
of Charles
Martel*

(737 and 739) made him master of Gaul. In 735 the Merovingian king had died. Charles neither attempted to assume the crown for himself nor made any effort to fill the vacant throne. Until after his death in 741 there was no king in France. But if he did not wear the long hair and crown of royalty or carry the lance of kingship, he nevertheless ruled as no Merovingian had ruled for two centuries past. Under his protection, the Saxon missionaries Willibrord and Boniface (Winfried) carried on among the Frisians and Germans a labor which was to bear fruit of eminent importance. Missionary work has always been regarded as an obligation by the Christian Church, and Rome has ever held in high esteem those who have dedicated their lives to the spread of the Gospel. Canonization has been the frequent regard of those who met death at the hands of the pagans they had tried to save.

With missionary endeavor held in such favor, those who assisted or protected the evangelists received the gratitude of the Church. Gregory the Great had written his appreciation for the assistance given to Augustine by Brunhild. Charles Martel was known at Rome as the man who made possible the early successes of Boniface. So it was natural that Gregory III, faced with the prospect of a Lombard assault upon the capital of Christendom, should appeal to the conqueror of the Saracen and the supporter of Boniface. But Charles did not comply with this request, even though it was accompanied with a replica of the keys of Peter. He may have been too busy with the affairs of his own "kingdom," or he may have felt that it would be an act of gross ingratitude to attack Liutprand, whose aid had been of value in checking the Saracen invasion of 739.

Charles Martel has suffered severely at the hands of the Church, despite his signal services to Christianity. His sons and grandson were constantly reminded of his shortcomings and informed that he was most certainly to be found among the damned. Proof of this was established in a manner which eliminated argument. His tomb was opened and there issued forth either a column of black smoke, a dragon, or a loathsome serpent, none of which could be mistaken for anything but the Devil himself.

The reason for this high disfavor is to be found in Charles' treatment of individual churches. He spent most of his life in the field and nearly every year saw the undertaking of a new campaign. But military ventures demanded adequate support, and support of any kind worth the having must be purchased. The easiest and

*Charles con-
demned by
the Church*

most acceptable means of procuring support was by making grants of land, either outright or as *beneficia*. The Church had vast estates which were an irresistible temptation to a warrior seeking means to buy an army. Charles did not resist this temptation, and the lands of bishoprics and abbeys were bestowed upon men who would pay for them in military service. This seizure of church land was made upon a large scale; his descendants restored forty-one estates to the Abbey of St Denis and this probably did not make a full restitution. Charles did even more. That church land might render its full military service, vacant bishoprics and abbacies were filled with his followers and the military bishop became a common phenomenon. His nephew, Hugh, was made Bishop of Paris, Bayeux, and Rouen, and his military value (if not his spiritual worth) was increased by the abbacies of Saint-Wandrille, Fleury-sur-Loire, and Jumièges.

But we must not judge Charles by other standards than he would have set for himself. His achievements were great, and it is difficult to see how the accomplishments of Charlemagne could have been effected but for the work of his grandfather. He brought something of unity to the distracted "Three Kingdoms" and recalled the South to obedience. He reduced the great Saracen menace, he supported the first difficult steps of the missionaries to the East, and he focused the attention of harassed Rome upon the Franks. He was not a statesman (but then a State may be a reasonable prerequisite), and when he died he divided his kingdom, like a private farm, among his children, Carloman and Pepin.

In the division of territory, Carloman received the eastern portion, including Austrasia, Thuringia, and the lands of the Alemanni; Pepin was given Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence; while a third (illegitimate) son, Griffo, received a random assortment of scattered estates. Griffo was dissatisfied with his portion (had not his father also been illegitimate?), and quiet was only restored with his imprisonment. Carloman and Pepin coöperated with an amity unparalleled in Merovingian history. To avoid the charge of usurpation and to give themselves the symbol of authority, they filled the throne (743) which Charles Martel had allowed to remain unoccupied for six years. A Merovingian was found in a monastery who, with the name of Childeric III, provided the necessary authority for the brothers. Carloman and Pepin were active friends of the Church. Pepin had received his education at the monastery of St

*The sons of
Charles
Martel*

*Pepin "the
Short"*

Denis and had been duly impressed by the judgment of the Church upon his father's past offenses and their present punishment. The brothers made what restitution of lands they could and held that the sequestrations had been in the nature of *beneficia*, the ownership still remaining to the Church. "Lay bishops" fell out of favor, and sincere efforts were made to improve the morals of monks and clergy and to bring the administration of the churches into closer line with canonical practice.

This pleasant partnership, which was as effective in maintaining order and in controlling subject tribes as it was cordial to the Church, was dissolved in 747. In that year Carloman turned away from the world and assumed the garb of a monk, first at Soracte, whence, to escape the crowds of the admiring or the curious, he removed to Monte Cassino. Pepin was now in uncontested control of Gaul.

For a century it had been obvious that the Merovingians had no other qualification for kingship than that of birth. It was equally obvious that for nearly a century the line of Pepin and Arnulph had demonstrated its ability to rule. Should this anomaly continue to exist? Should the kingship belong to him who had the actual or the apparent power? Should the king be an actor or a masque? This not too subtle conundrum was presented by Pepin (we are told) to Pope Zachary in 751, so that the answer as coming from the vicar of God might be regarded as a divine solution.

Zachary is reported to have replied that it was better for him who had the power to rule than for him to reign who had not the power. Fortified thus with the approval of St Peter, Pepin summoned an assembly of the magnates, lay and cleric, at Soissons, and there, "with the advice and consent of all the Franks," he was elected king. Childeric III was returned to his monastery and the Merovingian dynasty disappears from history.

There is a naïveté about this story of the transference of the Frankish crown which stamps it as manufactured. Without attempting to defend Zachary it is, none the less, difficult to imagine the vicar of God publicly and officially endorsing the principle that "Might is Right." This much at least seems certain, that if the Pope replied as was stated the answer was given orally and no document convicts him of sanctifying the success of force. It is easier to believe that the story circulated from Pepin's court. Christ was the God of the Franks and the Gallo-Romans, and His endorse-

Pepin seeks
the crown

and gets it
(751)

ment, through His vicar, of Pepin and his line would go far to silence those whose consciences hinted at injustice. Three years later, in 754, Zachary's successor, Stephen II, came to France and gave the stamp of divine approval to this "palace revolution" by consecrating Pepin as king of the Franks and his wife as queen. As an additional honor and to emphasize the connection between the head of the Church and the head of the Franks, Pepin and his two sons were made patricians of Rome.

The consecration of Pepin at St Denis was an innovation in Frankish royalty. No Merovingian king had ever been formally blessed by the Church. The act of consecration carried with it the idea that the king was the chosen of God and acquired the "divinity that doth hedge." The king became more than a man, though something less than a god. The Church was more closely bound to the State than ever, and the necessary elements for a Christian theocracy were established. Under such an administration all subjects must be Christians, civil and religious rights cross each other at a hundred points, and the sword and the crozier are but the symbols of the "two arms of one and the same divine government upon earth." Disobedience was not only a crime against the State but an offense to God. This sacred character added greatly to the strength of the new line.

The papacy was well aware of the value of the service it had performed and had no intention of allowing it to go unrewarded. Before Stephen II returned to Rome he secured from Pepin the promise of a speedy expedition into Italy, to check the advance of the Lombards upon the Eternal City. This is probably the time when the world's most famous forgery, the "Donation of Constantine," appeared. This document set forth how Constantine, cured of leprosy by the prayers of Pope Sylvester, had shown his gratitude by abandoning to the Bishop of Rome the imperial city, the Italian peninsula, and the islands of the West. These lands of the Church were now menaced by the Lombards. Was it not only right that the newly anointed king should save the property of God's Church?

The Lombards, under Alboin, had invaded Italy in 567. The peninsula, left "half a tomb" by the bitter war which had all but exterminated the Ostrogoths, fell an easy prey to these vigorous warriors. The rich lands of the great Po valley were overrun, the cities submitted almost without resistance, and the conquerors

The significance of the consecration of Pepin

The "Donation of Constantine"

The papacy is worried by the Lombards

gave their name to the "Paradise of Italy." Scattered bands established themselves in the south and organized the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento. It was the natural policy of the Lombards to try and connect this great territory in the north to the districts in the south and create a united kingdom of Italy. Two enemies stood in the way, the Roman Empire of the East, which still held out at Ravenna, and the Bishop of Rome, still nominally the subject of the Empire. Between Rome and Ravenna a thin corridor prevented the junction of the northern and southern Lombards. It was the effort made by the Lombards to absorb this territory that brought on the appeal to Pepin. From the political standpoint the situation was indeed critical, for Ravenna had fallen to the Lombards in 751, the year of Pepin's coronation. The issue was unquestionably political rather than religious, for the Lombards had abandoned their Arianism for the Christianity of Rome. The Bishop of Rome had long enjoyed the virtual independence of a temporal ruler. His dependence upon Constantinople was weakened by distance, the embarrassments of the emperors, and a violent disagreement over the question of the use of images in the churches. The Pope was not anxious to have a political superior so near as the Lombard capital at Pavia. So he turned to France.

Pepin in Italy In 754 Pepin crossed the Alps at the head of his Franks, many of whom had been unwilling to attack the men who had fought with them against the Saracens. Even Carloman left the quiet of his monastery to embarrass his brother by asking, "What have the Franks to do with the Lombards?" Aistulph, the Lombard king, hastened to submit and promised Pepin to restore Ravenna and a number of specified districts in the exarchate, not to the Emperor but to the Pope! Failure to fulfill these conditions led to a second invasion in 756. On the occasion of this second visit to Italy, Pepin went to Rome and made a formal transfer of the lands to the Pope. The Bishop of Rome had become a temporal sovereign, and the unification of Italy, which seemed so near in 750, was delayed until the withdrawal of French troops from Rome eleven hundred years later.

For the next twelve years Pepin was busy with the old problems. He warred against the Saxons and recovered Narbonne from the Saracens. He found it necessary to invade Aquitaine to remind that spirited district of its dependence upon the king of the Franks. In 768 he died, dividing his kingdom between his sons, Carloman

and Charles. To the former he gave Burgundy, Provence, Septimania, and the districts along the Rhine, roughly speaking, the South and East. To Charles he left the North and West, Austrasia, and parts of Aquitaine and Neustria.

The two brothers did not agree either in policies or as to their inheritances, and it was all that their mother could do to prevent open civil war. Fortune (or, as a monkish chronicler has it, "the fifth and not the least" blessing of God) favored Charles; for death removed Carloman in 771 and Charles attached his brother's kingdom to his own, disregarding the claims of his nephews.

In 773 he invaded Italy. We have the same story of an appeal to the Franks made by a pope faced with a Lombard menace. But a less dignified motive betrays itself as well. Charles, at his mother's suggestion, had married Desiderata, daughter of the Lombard king Desiderius, incidentally repudiating a bride to do so. The prospect of a marriage between the king of the Franks and an "unspeakable Lombard" had horrified the Bishop of Rome, Stephen II, who had begged him not to contract such a mésalliance. He extolled the beauties of the girls of France and generously suggested, "Love them. It is your duty." The inconvenience of bigamy was overlooked. But Charlemagne had married Desiderata only to repudiate her in turn and send her back to her father. It was to the court of Desiderius, too, that the widow of Carloman had fled, taking her children with her; and these had stronger claims to the east and south of the Frankish kingdom than Charles. The appeal from Stephen's successor, Hadrian, was opportune.

The army of Charles swept the Lombard forces from the field and blocked them up in Pavia. Confident that his enemy could not escape, he left the siege of the Lombard capital to his army and paid a visit to Rome, where he confirmed and even amplified the "Donation of Pepin" to the Holy See. The quieting effect of this act was in part offset by Charles' subsequent procedure. The siege of Pavia had brought Desiderius to terms; he accepted the prospect of ending his days in a French monastery. We do not know what happened to the children of Carloman—an ominous silence. Charles now assumed the title of king of the Lombards and may have received the iron crown of Lombardy at the hands of the Bishop of Milan, but this last is doubtful.

But if Charles, or Charlemagne, to give him the title by which he is always known, did not assume the symbols of royalty he

*Charlemagne
is king*

*The first
Italian
journey*

The "Donation" again

exercised all the prerogatives of a king. The Pope became uneasy, and his disquietude increased when, in 776-777, Charlemagne extended his Italian influence by invading the Lombard duchies of Spoleto and Benevento in the south of the peninsula. The Pope had desired a liberator not an Italian king. To papal politics it mattered little whether the king of Italy were a Lombard or a Frank.

Other scenes of activity now called for the attention of Charlemagne. For the next thirty years (with the exception of the year 790, which stands out as an *annus mirabilis*, for it was a year of peace) he was engaged in the many wars which gave him his military reputation. It would render "confusion worse confounded" to deal with his campaigns in chronological order. The geographic method has, at least, the advantage of revealing the scope of his activities and the extent of his influence.

The most spectacular of his campaigns were carried on against the Saxons and occupied nearly a third of the years between 774 and 804. The Saxons had long occupied the region between the Rhine and the Elbe, but had made almost no progress toward political or cultural development. They remained a congeries of independent tribes without kings or priests. They had never formed an effective confederacy as the Alemanni and Franks, and they failed to unite when attacked by Charlemagne. Since the days of Chlotar I they had been tributaries of the Frankish kingdom, but rebellion was their normal state. An additional offense was their paganism, which was of a vigoroussness rare among barbarian tribes and which provided the only recognizable unifying element.

The Saxon wars were avowedly religious wars, and the excuse if not the spirit of Christianity was emphasized. The same might be said of all the wars of Charlemagne. In the first campaign (774) he invaded Westphalia with three columns (his invariable procedure) and forced the Saxons to a formal acceptance of Christianity. In 782 it was necessary to take revenge for a revolt which had acquired some local success at Sunthal, and a warning to future rebels was provided by the execution of 4500 Saxons at Verden. This was followed by the famous *Capitulatio de partibus Saxonie*, a code which contained no penalty less than death. Capital punishment befell the unhappy Saxon who did not respect the fasts of the Church or ate meat during Lent; who to escape baptism pretended to have been baptized, or having been baptized suffered a relapse; or who, at the instigation of the Devil, burned a human being alive,

or partook of human flesh, or cremated a corpse. The guiding spirit of the Saxon revolts, although he never seems to have taken the field, was Widukind. On his submission and baptism in 785 he disappeared from history, though he lived on in legend as a saint. The massacre at Verden, the "capitulary of blood," and the transplantation of thousands of Saxon peasants to Neustria broke the back of the resistance, and serious trouble came to an end in 804. Bishoprics were established at Bremen, Münster, and Paderborn to foster the nascent Christianity. The Saxon wars were utterly ruthless, but they "decided finally and for good the question in Germany between heathenism and Christianity, between continued barbarism or the first steps, the only ones then possible, toward civilization."

The campaign against the Saracens in Spain might also pass for a religious war were it not for the fact that Charlemagne interfered to assist the disaffected emir of Saragossa against the new caliph of Cordova. The first expedition in 778 was a complete failure. Charlemagne's advance was certainly checked, his army probably defeated, and during the retreat his rear guard was overwhelmed by the Basques at Roncesvalles, where Roland showed himself so mighty of arm and of lung. In 795 he was more successful and established the Spanish March, to which Barcelona was added in 797. The Ebro was now the southwestern boundary of the Frankish kingdom.

Again the East called for attention. Bavaria had long granted formal recognition of Frankish supremacy but had ever been ready to assume an independent attitude. Under Duke Tassilo, Bavaria rebelled. Charlemagne at once proceeded to reduce it to submission. In 788 the district was overrun, Tassilo was sent to a monastery, and Bavaria was incorporated as an integral part of Charlemagne's dominions. The conquest of the Saxons and Bavarians opened the way for the extension of Christian influence to the east. In 789 the Abotrites, Wiltzes, and Sorbs among the northern Slavs were defeated. Further south the Avars, together with what tribes remained of Attila's miscellaneous empire, were conquered by the end of the century and Christianity reappeared on the lower Danube. Bohemia was overwhelmed in a single campaign (805-806). Marauding bands of Danes in their swift black ships disturbed the last years of Charlemagne. Their raids had not been serious, but legend represents Charlemagne as filled with gloomy foreboding as

Charlemagne visits Spain

Roncesvalles (778)

Charlemagne extends his power eastward

to the fate of his country at the hands of these "vikings" when he should no longer be alive to defend it. In any event, he seems to have organized something in the way of coastal defense. Emergency fleets were constructed and kept in readiness at the principal river mouths, and arsenals were established at Boulogne and Ghent.

Charlemagne's wars are more impressive by reason of their number and the vast territory over which they were waged than because of their magnitude. He met no nation at all comparable to the Franks in military strength except the Saracens, and over these his successes were not remarkable. The obstinate and disunited Saxons maintained a desperate struggle for a quarter of a century. Charlemagne's genius lay in organization and a rational plan of campaign. His armies were quickly assembled, adequately equipped, and came upon the enemy with paralyzing swiftness. He invariably invaded in multiple columns which concentrated upon a determined objective. If the test of ability is accomplishment, Charles deserves the title of "Great." From the Atlantic to the lower reaches of the Danube, from Poland to the Bay of Naples, from the English Channel to the Pyrenees, stretched the great expanse of territory which formed the Carolingian Empire.

The use of the last word in the preceding paragraph brings us to the event which channeled political thought in Europe for a thousand years. In 799 the Bishop of Rome was once again in difficulties. Leo III had succeeded Hadrian, but Leo became the object of jealousy and hatred to political aspirants in the city of Rome. He had been attacked with such brutality that his assailants deprived him of his eyes and tongue. His character received no more mercy than his body: he was accused of murder, simony, adultery, idolatry, and perjury. This humiliated figure crossed the Alps and appealed for justice to the great Frankish king. Charlemagne sent him back to Rome with a bodyguard of his own followers and the promise that he himself would come to Italy and make full investigation. Late in November of 800 Charlemagne entered Rome and opened his court. To save the Holy See from the indignity of a judicial trial, Leo was allowed to clear himself of the charges by taking an oath of innocence, and this being satisfactorily accomplished he was restored to office. On Christmas Day, as the celebration of High Mass was coming to an end, Leo took the imperial crown from the altar and placed it upon the head of Charlemagne while the people cried out: "Hail to Charles the Augustus, crowned of

God, the great and peace-loving Emperor of the Romans!" He who had entered the church as king of the Franks and Lombards left it as Roman Emperor.

Whole seas of ink have been used to discuss the motive or the justice of this imperial coronation. Had it been prearranged between Pope and king, perhaps as early as Leo's visit to Paderborn? The verbal unanimity of the popular chorus suggests rehearsal. Einhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne, says that the king was annoyed at the Pope's action and would not have attended the service, even though it was Christmas Day, had he known what Leo proposed doing. Einhard may be right, but for a different reason than the one he suggests. In the first place, it was not at all obvious that there was an imperial crown to be bestowed. It is true that there was no Emperor, but there was an Empress and no extension of the Salic law could disinherit females in Byzantium. Charlemagne might reasonably feel uneasy as to the reaction of the Eastern world. The fact that he subsequently considered marriage with the Empress Irene (who attained her title by the blinding and murder of her son, Constantine VI) indicates the state of his uncertainty. In the second place, if the Empire were vacant was it within the papal jurisdiction to fill the vacancy? Was the "Donation of Constantine" thus embracing? It is useless to ask. Five hundred years later Dante, who did not know the "Donation" to be a forgery, argued that Constantine had no right to give nor Sylvester to receive the Empire, and Otto III of Germany had some vague doubts as to the genuineness of the document. Zachary had already exercised the "sacred right of insurrection" when he approved the coronation of Pepin. Leo was following a precedent on a more dramatic scale. The coronation could be excused, perhaps, as a recognition of the position which the Frankish king had attained, but it "was founded upon no law" nor was it "competent to create one for the future." In the third place, Charlemagne might reasonably wonder as to the relative position of Pope and Emperor, now that he had received the imperial crown as the grant of the Bishop of Rome. Did that imply that there could be no Emperor without papal approval? When Charlemagne raised his son Louis (such was the eighth century form of "Clovis") to the imperial dignity in 813, he was careful that Louis should take the crown from the altar himself, as if to refute any inferences which might be drawn from his own coronation. A thousand years later Napoleon

*A nice
dilemma*

forestalled any ambiguity by placing the imperial crown upon his head with his own hands.

The Western Empire lived again to last until our great-grandfathers' day. The revival of the Empire did not come with a suddenness which shocked. The idea of Empire had never disappeared. "The conviction that the imperial sovereignty was the only true *Imperium*, that the governing power flowed from and could be transmitted by it alone, was shared with the Goths by the other Germanic princes who had settled in the provinces that had once been Roman. The Germanic peoples could imagine no fabric of political organization except in the Roman form with Roman institutions and laws."¹ The Roman Church and Roman law helped to keep alive the belief in the Roman Empire, although its territory had been divided into a number of barbarian states. Not only the Church and the law but a growing interest in literature had turned men's mind to the Empire. And to the idea there was now added the fact.

The establishment of the Empire had little effect upon administration, which remained substantially the same as under the Merovingians. The conquered territory east of Saxony and Bavaria was not incorporated into the Empire. Italy remained a separate kingdom (under the Emperor's son Pepin), with few changes beyond the substitution of the Frankish count for the Lombard duke and the appearance of the Salic law beside the Roman and the Lombard. Troublesome Aquitaine was raised to a kingdom, but without any apparent effect upon its loyalty.

The Emperor, as king of the Franks, was still the head of the State and in effect was the head of the Church as well. Most of the old machinery was retained. There was the same confusion between public office and personal service, between political and domestic duties. But there was more of order and specialization of function. The *major domus*, whose career had been disastrous for the Merovingians, disappeared, his place being taken by the less dangerous count of the palace. The Merovingian *referendarius* made way for the chancellor. Much of the routine work was handled by notaries under the direction of a prothonotary. Business of a general nature which affected the welfare of the people at large was commonly discussed in a "council," which did not have a fixed membership but was composed of the ordinary palace officials and

*The revival
not unnatural*

*Imperial
administration*

¹ Döllinger, J. J. I. von, *Addresses*, p. 85.

those important personages, lay or cleric, who happened to be present at the imperial court.

As before, local administration was left to the counts, margraves, and bishops, with their subordinates. But to insure the satisfactory fulfillment of their duties and to bring the center into "living connection with distant parts and provincial officials," Charlemagne made regular use of an official employed but rarely by his predecessors. This was the *missus dominicus*, or royal envoy. The Empire was divided into a varying number of artificial districts called *missatica*. To each of these two or more *missi* were assigned, of whom one at least was a churchman. The *missi* made a circuit through the district, performing a service similar to the Eastern satraps, the "eyes and ears" of Persian kings. They investigated the administration of the count and the bishop, they inspected the monasteries, they listened to complaints, and they held courts to hear the appeals of those who suffered from real or supposed injustice. As the personal representatives of the Emperor they took precedence over all officials in the *pagus* and, at times, exercised the right of dismissal when they found officials unworthy of their office.

Carolingian legislation was theoretically a combination of royal decision and popular consent. According to the Edict of Pistres (864), "Law is made by the consent of the people and the promulgation of the king." In practice, the consent of the people came to mean the consent of the people's representatives, the counts, dukes, margraves, bishops, and the great ones of the kingdoms. For generations it had been customary for the Franks to hold a "general assembly" each year, which all freemen were expected to attend and at which important tribal matters were discussed and questions of war and peace decided. Under the Merovingians the assembly was usually held in March. Pepin had altered the time to May, either to allow the bishops to celebrate Easter in their own dioceses or because fodder could then be more easily obtained, or both. At these assemblies bills or suggestions for legislative action (which had been prepared at a smaller assembly of the magnates the previous autumn) were presented for popular approval. In the days of almost constant warfare these "Mayfields" served as mobilization centers, and counts were ordered to appear *hostiliter*; that is to say, accompanied by the fighting men of their district and ready for an immediate campaign. But in the last decade of Charlemagne's reign campaigns were rare, the counts were told to attend the May-

Local administration

The Carolingian "Missi"

Legislation

The "May-fields"

fields *simpliciter*; that is, without a military following. The consequence of this was that the spring meeting tended to become an "assembly of notables" like the unofficial autumn gathering.

By whomever attended, the legislation agreed upon was issued under the name of capitularies. The capitularies were complementary to, not substitutes for, the existing folk laws. Approximately one-half of them deal with the Church. They are generally divided into three classes: the capitularies *per se scribenda*, or administrative orders valid for the current reign, those *legibus addenda* which modified or supplemented existing folk law, and the *capitula misorum*, or instructions for the royal envoys.

In the administration of justice one noticeable improvement over Merovingian practice was made by Charlemagne. In the place of the *rachimburgi* who assisted the count in determining the evidence and proclaiming the law, an official specifically trained in law and judicial procedure and known as the *scabinus* or *echevin* was substituted. The right of appeal, which had formerly been limited to God (by means of the ordeal, or wager of battle) or the king, was extended to the courts of the *missi*, held four times a year (the "quarter sessions"), in January, April, July, and October. The financial system remained unchanged.

The Empire of Charlemagne was essentially a military one, and the maintenance of an efficient armed force became a matter of first importance. Charlemagne did not rely upon the good will of his chief followers to repair to the "host" with a full complement of fighting men. Theoretically, every freeman in the Empire was liable for military service and the courts were empowered to prosecute defaulters. But the many campaigns and the distant theaters of war had disastrous effects upon the poorer freemen. Many surrendered their liberty or attached themselves to lords or lands with privileges of immunity. Universal obligation became inexpedient and modifications crept in. The unit of service was shifted from the individual to the land. Roughly speaking, every three "manses" (or *hides* = 360 acres), whether held outright or as *beneficia*, must provide one fully-equipped soldier. The inclusion of the "benefice" in this military regulation had far-reaching results, for what had previously been a mere social custom of landholding was thereby recognized as a legal institution. The elements of feudalism were crystallizing. Further amelioration in military service was provided by a more equitable demand upon various districts. The number

of men from any region varied in indirect ratio to the distance from the war zone; e.g., whereas only one Saxon from every six "manses" was called upon for service in Spain, all Saxons might be required for a campaign against the Sorbs, just across the border. Even with these modifications the burden of military service proved excessive, and the triumphs of Charlemagne were purchased at the cost of a dwindling number of free landowners and an increasing number of vassals and serfs.

Much has been written about the splendor of the Carolingian civilization, and there can be no doubt that it was superior to the one that preceded it. But the glory of Charlemagne has encouraged praise of all things Carolingian, yet much has been admired as gold that was only plate or gilt. The genial company at the palace obscures the toiling peasant family to be found in every *pagus* shivering in its

"silly cote,
Whose thatched sparres are furred with sluttish soote."

The seventy-five varied plants and the twelve species of trees inventoried on the royal *villæ* make us forget the boiled beans and peas, and the water or whey to wash them down, which was the fare of the greatest number of his subjects. After all, we are only in the ninth century.

Secular life at its best was to be found at the court. The domestic life of the Emperor could not have done much to raise the moral tone of society. He had more than twenty children and of wives half a score (we know of nine). There is a curious lack of logic in his sense of responsibility to his children. Of his many sons he chose to regard as legitimate only those who were born to his third and favorite wife, Hildegarde. His daughters were treated more impartially. He loved to have them near him and took them with him on his campaigns, as he did their mothers, and he watched over their education. We have pleasing pictures of Charlemagne riding to the hunt with his sons and daughters and picnicking at the edge of the dark forest after the kill, or with his family grouped about him at the High Table, listening to the songs of minstrels or the thoughtful prose of Augustine. But his affection for his daughters was always selfish and sometimes unorthodox. Amalberge suffered a broken arm when she differed with him as to the reasonable limits of parental love. Charlemagne would not permit his daughters to

The life at court

marry, but otherwise he placed them under little restraint: Bertha became the mistress of one saint and the mother of a second, Rotrud bore a son to the Count of Maine, and Hiltrud is frequently met with in later legends.

Apart from his private life, Charlemagne was an attractive figure with just those qualities which lend themselves to heroic treatment. He was of imposing stature, some six feet, four inches in height, though somewhat inclined to corpulence. He was athletic and excelled in swimming, his favorite form of exercise. He enjoyed his food but was moderate in drinking. He spoke with a thin, high voice. He was ordinarily of a bluff, genial temper, associating freely with men of all ranks, making those friendly inquiries which mean so much and cost so little, and taking a genuine interest in the myriad problems, great or small, of his vast Empire. Charlemagne was intelligent although somewhat lacking in education. He could read and speak Latin, understood a little Greek, but was never able to master the difficulty of writing. He realized the value of education and grieved over the fact that his bishops were rich in sentiment but poor in grammar. To offset the prevailing ignorance and to foster education throughout his Empire, he established his famous "palace school," the nursery of the Carolingian Renaissance.

The state of culture in France may be suspected from the fact that Charlemagne was obliged to import the leading figures of his "school." Peter of Pisa, Paulinus of Aquileia, and Paul "the Deacon" were Italians; Einhard was a German; Agobard a Spaniard; Theodulph, Bishop of Orléans, a Goth; and the most famous of all, Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon from Northumbria, who had been trained at York. Alcuin revised the text of Jerome's Vulgate version of the Bible, but what characterized him "even more than his extended learning and wide reading, especially in patristic literature, was his scholarly instinct. He was a well-trained Latinist, and in point of fact his principal work deals with grammar; when he wrote, he used Latin with ease and perspicuity, conforming, as exactly as his knowledge allowed, to classical standards."² These learned foreigners, together with some Frankish nobles, attracted by curiosity or genuine enthusiasm, formed a delightful literary circle which mingled serious study of the Classics with the production of riddles, anagrams, and complimentary verse. Charlemagne made excursions into the fields of poetry and received the praise due a royal com-

*Charlemagne's
attainments*

*Carolingian
culture*

*The "palace
school"*

² Foligno, C., *Latin Thought in the Middle Ages*, pp. 81-82.

poser. There was, however, an attempt made to recover the purity of the classical style, and in this consists the "revival" of learning. The attempt had two important consequences. In the first place, that the classical writers might be better studied, manuscripts of their works were collected and numerous copies made in the recently developed Carolingian *minuscule*, the most beautiful of human handwriting, which succeeded the *uncial* and *half-uncial* originals. As a result, "practically all that we know of the writers of Rome goes back solely or mainly to Carolingian copies." In the second place, "revival" implies death, "and Latin, once a spoken and traditional language, becomes for the first time a dead language, when the well-trained scholars of the court of Charlemagne started to use it with almost classic accuracy and taste." In itself the Carolingian Renaissance was superficial. With the possible exception of Einhard, the men who produced were the directors, not the products, of the "school"; and the Renaissance declined with the same rapidity with which it had come into being. It was not entirely without result, for it gave a certain stimulus to study, fostered the foundation of schools, emphasized the necessity of an educated clergy, and greatly increased the number of manuscripts.

The improvement in education was paralleled by an advance in other aspects of life. More land was brought under cultivation as the practice of acquiring *beneficia* extended and monastic settlements multiplied. But the small freeholder was disappearing. In 794 the government legislated in the field of economics, passing a "Law of Maximum" which fixed the price of wheat and bread and restricted the exportation of certain staples. An attempt was made to standardize weights and measures and establish a silver coinage based on the "pound." Industry avoided the older municipalities and settled upon the *villæ* or in the monasteries. Some of the abbeys even organized industrial towns of their own, in which the workmen of particular trades appear to have grouped themselves into guilds (*geldoniæ*) or benefit societies (*confratriæ*). Trade and commerce remained sluggish or fell away in face of Saracen opposition. It still dealt mainly in the luxuries demanded by the magnates or required by the Church, which reached the consumer through the weekly markets or the regional fairs.

As under the Merovingians, art, monopolized by the Church, showed few traces of originality. There were signs of Byzantine influence in the introduction of mosaics and in the modifications of

*Economic
revival*

church architecture. There was an active production in objects of gold and ivory as reliquaries or altar adornments.

Social life, as before, centered about the Church, and the bonds between Church and State had infinitely tightened since the consecrations of 754 and 800. Charlemagne regarded himself as the head of the Frankish Church as certainly as he was the head of the Frankish State. Like his predecessors, he made constant use of churchmen as his agents and filled vacancies with his own appointees. He regarded the Church as the best means of obtaining order and of improving the welfare of his people. He took his position as "Defender of the Faith" seriously, and constantly interfered in, and legislated for, the concerns of the Church. He summoned councils and presided over them, often determining the result of the discussion even in matters strictly theological. "At the end of the eighth century it was not the pope who was infallible, it was the king." He realized that the weakness of the Church rested in large part upon the ignorance of the clergy, and he planned the establishment of a sound educational system.

Many of the bishops and abbots whom he appointed had been trained in his "palace school," and he enjoined upon all bishops and abbots the duty of establishing schools for the instruction of prospective clerics and young monks. "Let the Psalms and the Psalter, calculation and grammar, be taught in all bishoprics and monasteries." That this might be more effectively done, attention was given to individual libraries, and where proper texts were lacking, scribes made copies in the exquisite *minuscule*. Alcuin was active in preparing improved texts and established the course of study known as the "Seven Liberal Arts," made up of the *Trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and the *Quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Theodulph of Orléans was most energetic in raising the educational standards of his diocese. Considerable literary production resulted, taking the form of homilies and commentaries, histories (such as Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* and Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*), monastic chronicles, and *annales*, or religious poetry modeled upon Prudentius, Fortunatus, Virgil, Horace, and even Martial.

It is impossible to give any brief and satisfactory estimate of the importance of Charlemagne or the value of his Empire. That he towered above his contemporaries is undeniable. He was an intelligent man struggling to establish a theocratic monarchy in a half-

civilized society. He carried the work of his predecessors far along the road to completion. But the Empire which he built depended too much upon the personal ability of the ruler. The very elements which had made it strong: the forceful personality of Charlemagne, the magic of his name, the centralization of power in his own hands, were fatal after his death. "The institution (the Empire) had no strength of its own, it was absolutely dependent on the circumstances of the Court."

Charlemagne died in January, 814, and left the Empire to his son, Louis the Pious. In his reign (814-840) began the decline of the Carolingians.

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CHAPTER X

THE CAROLINGIAN DECLINE

*Politics
subordinated
to family*

*The division
of 806*

*Louis the
Pious
(814-840)*

His character

IMPORTANT as was the transfer of the imperial crown to the king of the Franks, it is clear that Charlemagne did not give it the significance that was to become such a powerful factor in succeeding centuries. If he assumed the title of Emperor he still regarded himself as primarily king of the Franks, and so little considered the political concept of Empire that in 806 he refused to sacrifice the Frankish rights of heredity to the *idea* of State. In that year he partitioned his dominions among the sons of his favorite wife, Hildegarde. To Charles, the eldest, he gave troublesome Aquitaine and part of Burgundy; to Louis, the district known as Neustria and that portion of Germany which lay north of the Danube; and to Pepin, the Italian peninsula and the Alpine regions to the borders of Germany. But Charles and Pepin died before their father; Louis crowned himself Emperor in 813 at Charlemagne's request, and there seemed a chance that the Empire, as distinct from a loose attachment of kingdoms, might be continued.

Louis succeeded his father in 814, and the twenty-six years of his reign introduced a period of disintegration which lasted for nearly two centuries, and which ended in the substitution of the House of Capet for the Carolingians in France and the alienation of the imperial dignity to the rising power of Germany. It was an era of dissolution in which old institutions dropped out of sight or were transformed almost beyond recognition, in which new institutions or those of recent appearance gathered strength and changed the society in which they developed; an age of Merovingian jealousy and envy: brother against brother, father against son, the great ones against the crown. But it was also an age of transition and adjustment, and when the eleventh century opened the countries, the institutions, the ideas, and the society which determined the future history of Europe had taken shape.

Louis was thirty-six years of age when he became sole ruler of Charlemagne's vast dominions. He was powerfully built and gained a reputation as a mighty hunter. He had been well educated, was

modest, generous, and of a moral purity which caused him to send away those who had enlivened, if they had not improved, the life of the royal court. He took no part in the social activities of the palace, but sat removed in gloomy solitude while others listened to the minstrels, and was never known to smile pleasantly enough to show the white of his teeth. He was, perhaps, a neurasthenic, and there is some evidence that he sought questionable relief from his many troubles in deep and sullen drinking. He was always slow in putting into execution the decisions he was ever hesitant in making. He was extremely devout, "sweet and feeble," and allowed his policies to be controlled by the leading dignitaries of the Church, who rewarded him with the title of "the Pious." Altogether he was as unlike his father as any son could be. The administration of the Carolingian Empire depended for its efficiency upon the personal abilities of the Emperor, and Louis the Pious did not possess the qualities required by the imperial office.

One of the first acts of his reign compromised his very position as Emperor. In 816 he acceded to the advice of his ecclesiastics and allowed himself to be recrowned as Emperor at Rheims by Pope Stephen IV. This ceremony had the effect of implying that the coronation of 813 was of no validity and that, to be official, the imperial title must be received from the Bishop of Rome, a conception which Charlemagne had endeavored to destroy. How little importance Louis placed upon the theory or the fact of Empire was further revealed in the following year, when by the so-called "Constitution of 817" he partitioned it out among his sons. Pepin received Aquitaine with additional territories in the south and west of France, including Gascony and Toulouse; Louis, later styled "the German," was given Bavaria and lands east of the Rhine; to the eldest son, Lothar, no definite assignment was made, but he was elevated to the rank of "Associate Emperor" with supervisory powers over his brothers, who were not to engage in any activities beyond their own territories without his advice and consent.

The placing of Lothar in a position of official superiority was perhaps intended to continue the unity of the Empire, but no machinery was created for enforcing that arrangement which was, therefore, dependent upon the willingness of Pepin and Louis to coöperate with their elder brother. This disposition of the Empire was resented by the Emperor's nephew, Bernard, who had succeeded his father as king of Italy. He rebelled (818), was speedily deserted by his

*The revival of
the dilemma*

*The division
of 817*

*The revolt of
Bernard of
Italy (818)*

Italian supporters, and surrendered himself to the mercy of Louis the Pious. The Emperor sentenced him to be blinded, but the operation was done with such brutality that Bernard died a few days later. The death of Bernard preyed upon the introspective mind of the Emperor and filled him with such remorse that he performed a public penance at Attigny in 822. Men might respect this act of contrition in an individual; subjects would not welcome it in their king and Emperor.

*The birth of
Charles the
Bald (823)*

In 819 Louis the Pious had married Judith of Bavaria, a woman of surpassing beauty and rare charm. In the year following the "humiliation of Attigny" a child, known to history as Charles the Bald, was born of this marriage. Judith was anxious that Charles should be provided for, and she was so far successful that in 829 he was given extensive lands along the Rhine by the "Donation of Worms." Land could only be bestowed upon Charles at the expense of one or other of his half-brothers, who viewed the "Donation" as a present injustice and a possible indication of future losses. Lothar and Pepin openly revolted (830), and the Emperor agreed to arbitrate the question at Compiègne. By a new division in 831, Pepin retained Aquitaine; Louis the German increased his former holdings by the addition of Austrasia; Charles the Bald received Allemania, Burgundy, and Provence; Lothar was removed from his position of "Associate" and sent to console himself with the kingdom of Italy. This division was less satisfactory to the original heirs than the "Donation of Worms." Louis and Pepin joined forces and appealed to Lothar. This combination was too strong for Louis the Pious, although he showed a rare flash of energy and marched against his rebellious sons. His army deserted him at the "Field of Lies" (833), and he was deposed at Soissons in favor of Lothar. Judith was sent to a nunnery.

and of 831

*The "Field of
Lies" (833)*

Lothar was as incapable of ruling as his father, and Pepin and Louis the German, who had not been restrained by filial ties from rebelling against the father, felt no compunction in disregarding the authority of the brother. A general reaction in favor of the humiliated Emperor and his wife encouraged a revolt in 835 which restored Louis the Pious to his imperial position, a dignity he was able to maintain until his death in 840. In 839 the death of Pepin caused a redistribution of territory, which increased the lands already bestowed upon Charles the Bald and by which Lothar was to act as co-Emperor and regent and to administer the Empire in the interests

*The division
of 839*

of his half-brother until Charles was old enough to assume office for himself.

The death of Louis the Pious and the assumption of the imperial dignity by Lothar were signals for a renewed outbreak of the family quarrel. Louis the German and Charles the Bald, who was now eighteen years of age, combined their forces and moved against Lothar, who prepared to resist. The armies met at Fontenay (841), and after a bitterly fought contest Lothar was compelled to withdraw. The battle was not in itself decisive, but the heavy losses suffered by the aristocracy on both sides did much to weaken the defensive power of the Empire against the Northmen, who had already forced concessions from Louis the Pious and whose ravages were to terrorize France for two generations.

Lothar could not defeat the alliance of Charles and Louis, but neither of the rebels could oppose Lothar with any prospect of success without the assistance of the other. To insure continued co-operation and protection against imperial encroachment, Charles and Louis met at Strasbourg (842), and in the presence of their respective armies each took an oath, binding upon their followers as well, to come to the assistance of the other if attacked by the Emperor and to make no agreement with Lothar which would be injurious to the other. That there might be no misunderstanding the terms of the oath, each swore to it in the language spoken by the other's army. The "Strasbourg Oath" has great historic interest in that the first written specimens of early French and German vernacular appear in the recorded account of this bilingual agreement.

Lothar recognized his inability to overcome this combination and agreed to submit the whole question of imperial partition for discussion. At Verdun-sur-Doube (not the Verdun of the World War) the Empire was once more divided (843). Lothar was allowed to retain the imperial title and was given the peninsula of Italy, together with a narrow and indefensible strip of land running from the Alps to the North Sea. This corridor was vaguely delimited to the east by the Alps and the rivers Aar and Rhine and to the west by the rivers Rhone, Saône, Meuse, and Scheldt. Louis the German received all the lands to the east and even some of the territory about Spires, Worms, and Mainz, "because of the abundance of wine." All of the West went to Charles the Bald.

This Treaty of Verdun marked the end of a united Europe.

*Battle of
Fontenay
(841)*

*The Stras-
bourg oath
(842)*

*The Treaty of
Verdun-sur-
Doube
(843)*

From it emerged the great nations of France, Germany, and Italy, while the uncertainty of the boundaries of the "middle territory" and the impossibility of defending it encouraged the avarice of the rulers of France and Germany and gave to Europe the lasting heritage of the Alsace-Lorraine problem. It is true that Empire and Emperor continued, but only in name, for Charles and Louis became independent kings and the story of Europe from this time on must follow, not the history of an Empire, but the annals of France, of Germany, and of Italy.

Lothar gave Italy to his son Louis in 844 and procured for him the imperial crown and the title of Louis II in 850. Upon his death (855) Lothar divided his non-Italian territories between his two younger sons, Charles, who received Provence and southern Burgundy, and Lothar, to whom was given the land between the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, and from whom it received its name of *Lotharingia* (Lorraine).

Charles the Bald had received what appeared to be the most valuable portion of the Empire, but he was unable to hold it together in the face of rebellion from within and raids from without. Charles has suffered harsh treatment at the hands of historians, yet it is doubtful whether anyone could have done better with the materials at hand. He did not come into the possession of a united kingdom, regulated by an efficient administrative system. France contained two regions which might well be regarded as foreign. Brittany in the northwest had never granted more than a nominal recognition of Frankish sovereignty, and gloried in its Celtic independence; Aquitaine had always chafed under the domination of the North, and found a convenient excuse for disobedience in the conflicting claims of the sons of Pepin to be its rightful rulers.

Further, the thirty years of disorder and civil war had provided excellent opportunities for the assumption of independence by the great ones and quickened the tendencies which had appeared long before under the Merovingians. The harassed Emperor and the warring sons had purchased support by grants of land and immunities and by the surrender of royal rights within specified areas. Not only did the great ones withdraw themselves from the direct control of the central authority and so disorganize the public power, but the freeman contributed by entering the state of vassalage. For the freeman, finding that the State was unable to protect him, sought protection wherever he could, generally from the local magnate.

The familiar process of "commendation" continued, and the advantages of the *precarium* and *beneficium* became so widely recognized that the great ones no longer waited to be approached but offered attractive inducements that their lands might be occupied and the number of their followers increased. The freeman was often able to make his own conditions and to insist that the benefice remain in his family upon the original terms. This disintegration of the social entity and the emergence of a population crystallized into numberless groups owing service to, and expecting protection from, a local rather than a central authority played havoc with the State administration and made it impossible for Charles to control the great mass of his subjects directly, if at all.

The dissolution of society in France was accelerated by the invasions of the Northmen. Whether or not they had disturbed the last years of Charlemagne, it is certain that they had become an active menace in the days of Louis the Pious. Friesland had long suffered from their raids, for Friesland was admirably suited for pasturage and the market for wool was always active. The pastoral life attracted the northern barbarians; some of them settled on the farms they came to plunder, assisted by the bribes of Louis the Pious, who had given the lands about Dorestadt to the Norse leader, Ruric.

Northmen

Other bands, less industrious, more adventurous, or more impatient for wealth, began to plunder the coasts of England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, and France. In their long, black, double-prowed ships of shallow draft, which carried from seventy to one hundred well-disciplined fighting men, they could not only raid the coasts but could penetrate far up the rivers and plunder the richer districts of the interior. France was particularly vulnerable, for by the Rhine, the Meuse, the Scheldt, the Loire, the Moselle, the Rhone, the Saône, the Gironde, or the Seine the very heart of the country was open to attack. The cumbersome method of mobilization was too slow for effective defense, which was therefore left to the threatened district to manage as it could, by active resistance or by payment of tribute.

After the year 834 the raids increased in number and size. Rouen was attacked in 841; Paris bought off the besiegers in 845, only to have them before her walls again in 856 and 861; Bordeaux was burned in 848, Nantes captured in 853, and Orléans threatened in 856. Charles did what he could to defend his kingdom from these devastating raids. By the Edict of Pistres (864) he attempted to

*Norse raids
more frequent*

*The Edict of
Pistres
(864)*

create an efficient cavalry force to cope with the Northmen and ordered the construction of fortified bridges to check their advance along the waterways. But he stood almost alone. His brothers refused or failed to assist him against the common enemy; Brittany, under Noménoé, renounced its formal allegiance to the Frankish crown (845), and Charles was forced to recognize a Breton king (851); Aquitaine took advantage of the general chaos to proclaim Pepin II as king; while the Frankish magnates, who should have been the first to support the crown and to face the invaders, behaved so outrageously that Charles was obliged to issue an edict (at Quierzy, 857) against the great ones guilty of brigandage! It has been estimated that in the twenty years between 845 and 865 French abbeys alone paid 16,000 pounds of silver to the Northmen for immunity.

One magnate, however, attracted attention by his vigorous opposition to the Northmen. Robert the Strong, perhaps originally the Count of Tours, was given the territory between the Seine and the Loire in 859. This district he defended with rare success and even inflicted a severe defeat upon the invaders in 864. He died in battle in 866. Robert was the founder of the great House of Capet, which acquired the French throne in 987 and held it until "Citizen Capet" was executed in the Place de la Concorde in 1793.

Despite the disasters which accompanied the raids of the Northmen — the loss of wealth through plunder, tribute, fire, or ransoms; the cessation of industry and the interruptions of commerce; the serious depopulation through slaughter, pestilence, and famine; the increasing number of independent nobles and the decreasing number of freemen — Charles found time to quarrel with his brother and to covet the phantom title of Emperor. Lothar II died in 869, and Charles immediately threatened to seize Lorraine, but on the protest of Louis the German the lands were divided between the two uncles by the Treaty of Mersen (870). In 875 the Emperor Louis II died, and Charles invaded Italy to receive the imperial crown from Pope John VIII. Louis the German died in 876, and Charles attempted to seize Lorraine once again but was defeated at Andernach by the late king's son, Louis the Young. In 877 Charles entered Italy but the advancing forces of Carloman, another son of Louis the German, compelled him to fall back. He died on this retreat and was buried at Mantua in 877.

The career of Charles the Bald synchronized with the collapse

*Robert the
Strong*

*Internal
troubles*

of the Empire, the dislocation of society, the desolation of France, and the substitution of feudalism for an organized system of centralized government. His birth began the series of partitions which shattered the imperial unity, and his repeated efforts to annex Lorraine led to reprisals which prevented any coöperative effort against the Northmen. Charles could not hope to rule France without the coöperation of the great ones, whose main interest was the acquisition of privileges which led to immunity from royal interference and independence of royal restraint. He did try, but "no man can check a society in dissolution," and Charles had inherited a society which had already begun to decompose. His own complaint is justified by the facts and may serve to temper the harsh judgments which have been passed upon him: "The invasions of the pagans (i.e., the Northmen) and the bad faith of men, Christian only in name, destroy the effect of the capitularies executed to maintain order."

Charles the Bald and the decay of France

The death of Charles the Bald removed the last noteworthy member of the Carolingian line. His son, Louis the Stammerer, succeeded him on the throne, but only at the price of further concessions to the great ones, lay and spiritual, of the realm. Louis died in 879 leaving two sons, Louis III and Carloman, both of whom became kings of France. These two brothers gave promise of ability and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Northmen at Saucourt (881), but Louis died in the following year and Carloman in 884. They left no children, and the sole heir to the throne was a little boy, Charles the Simple, the posthumous son of Louis the Stammerer.

Chaos

It was a glorious time for the great ones to effect their independence. Under Charles the Bald had appeared some of the great feudatories of medieval France: Baldwin had become independent in Flanders, Pepin in Vermandois, and Robert the Strong in Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, a position which he passed on to his successor, Hugh the Abbot. But the necessity of a central authority, no matter how weak or how distant, was recognized as a source from which the great ones derived their respective powers and privileges, and a king was required to give an appearance of legality. The great ones passed over the claims of the infant Charles and offered the crown to Charles the Fat, son of Louis the German (885).

Germany was hardly in better case than France. The psychology of the Germans was tribal rather than monarchical, and they preferred to remain a federation of races rather than to submerge

The plight of Germany

their tribal identity in a common society. The Church, which was dedicated to the imperial idea and by its very nature opposed to the separation of peoples, was too poor and too weak in Germany to be of much effect in checking the elements of disintegration. When Louis the German died in 865 he left three sons, Carloman, Louis the Young, and Charles the Fat. To the first he had given Bavaria and the lands to the southeast, to Louis the districts of Franconia, Saxony, and Thuringia, and to Charles, Allemania and the southwest. Therefore there was little territorial unity and plenty of opportunity for fraternal jealousy.

In the year 885 a vast army of Northmen, estimated as high as 40,000 men, laid siege to Paris, which was defended by Eudes, son of Robert the Strong. For eleven months the Northmen attacked with vigor and persistence. Nor did they lack science, for they were the first barbarians to employ battering-rams and stone-throwers, which in their far wanderings they may have seen used by the armies of the Eastern Empire. The citizens showed equal determination and met courage with courage. In 886 Charles the Fat, who had taken the imperial crown in 881, appeared with a relieving force and camped on the hills outside the city. But instead of offering battle Charles offered seven hundred pounds of silver and the privilege of plundering Burgundy, which had become a separate kingdom in 879.

The natural indignation which this conduct aroused compelled Charles to abdicate his imperial title and his dignities as king of France and Germany (888). The latter fell under the control of Arnulf, illegitimate son of Carloman of Bavaria. Arnulf freed Germany from the ravages of the Northmen by his victory at Louvain, became Emperor in 896, seized Lorraine, but was unable to control the local magnates, and died in 899. With the death of his son, Louis the Child, who reigned from 899-911, the direct Carolingian line in Germany came to an end.

The Frankish nobles, after the abdication of Charles the Fat, passed over Charles the Simple and *elected* as king, the hero of the siege of Paris, Eudes. This procedure was distinctly revolutionary. Although some vestiges of the old elective system may have been perpetuated, it had become a matter of course that the ruler come from the Carolingian line. Since Eudes was not a Carolingian, the election of 888 was as revolutionary as the election of Pepin in 751. A Carolingian party sprang into existence, sold its support for concessions, and proclaimed Charles the Simple as the legitimate

*The siege of
Paris (885)*

*Charles the
Fat
(881-888)*

*The Capetian
interlude*

ruler (893). Five years of civil war ended with the death of Eudes (898), and Charles reigned alone.

Charles the Simple

Charles was energetic and ambitious, but he was surrounded by treacherous advisers and restricted by the weakness of the royal power which operated only in the royal domain and the estates of the Church. But Charles put an end to the ravages of the Northmen. By the Treaty of St Claire-sur-Epte in 911, he bestowed upon Rollo, leader of the Northmen, all the land between the river Epte and the sea in his immediate possession, and Brittany, if and when he should conquer it. In return, Rollo was to recognize the king of France as his overlord, become a Christian, and marry Gisela, the daughter of Charles the Simple.

The Treaty of St Claire-sur-Epte (911)

The move was a wise one, for by "sacrificing a part of his realm, Charles the Simple had saved the rest." The Normans, as they are more usually called, proved themselves loyal supporters of the Carolingians in their struggles against the nobility. A strong king was the last thing a Frankish magnate desired, and now that the Norman menace was removed, Charles could turn his attention to a resuscitation of the royal authority. In 923 Robert, Count of Paris and brother of the late King Eudes, headed a party of malcontent nobles who resented the favors which Charles showered upon Hagano, a man of mean extraction. Employing a somewhat obscure symbolism, these disgruntled noblemen threw straws upon the ground as a sign that they renounced their allegiance and elected Robert as their king. In the civil war which ensued Rollo came to the assistance of Charles, and Robert was killed at the battle of Soissons (923). But the rebellion was not to be put down so easily; the nobles elected Rudolf of Burgundy to succeed their fallen leader, passing over Robert's son, Hugh, probably at his own request. Charles continued the conflict but was enticed into a conference at Peronne by Herbert of Vermandois, who imprisoned him at Château-Thierry and possibly murdered him in 929.

and its importance

Civil War again

Rudolf found great difficulty in getting his position recognized. He lost Lorraine but was able to keep the throne until his death in 936. Hugh the Great, who had refused the kingship in 923, was the most powerful magnate in France, with vast lands stretching between the Seine and the Loire in the very heart of the kingdom. He was the natural choice of the anti-Carolingian party, but like the mayors of the palace in the Merovingian era he preferred to control kings rather than to wear the crown himself. Charles had

Hugh the Great

left a son, Louis, who had been taken to England, where he had been brought up at the court of his uncle, King Athelstan. Hugh procured Louis' election to the Frankish throne and received in return the title of "Duke of the French."

Louis IV (929-954)

Louis IV (or *d'Outremer*) was not content to play the part of a puppet king or to be satisfied with his capital, Laon, and the paltry acres that alone remained of the vast Carolingian inheritance. He tried to extend the royal power and check the growth of the great feudatories. His energy roused alarm, and his reign of eighteen years was characterized by intermittent warfare between Louis as the champion of the royal prerogative and Hugh the Great as the representative of the feudal magnates. The king's resources were insufficient, but the assistance of the German Emperor, Otto I, whose sister he had married, and the moral support of the Church enabled him to retain his crown until his death in 954. He left two sons, Lothar and Charles. Hugh the Great secured the throne for Lothar, who held it for thirty-two years. Hugh died in 956 and was succeeded by his son, Hugh Capet, who continued his father's policy. Lothar III was less capable than Louis IV; he broke with the German Emperor, Otto II, bringing upon France a German invasion which almost reached Paris; and he quarreled with the Archbishop of Rheims, the most powerful churchman in France. His sole success was the establishment of his brother as Duke of Lower Lorraine.

Hugh Capet

The last of the Carolings

Lothar was succeeded (986) by his son, Louis V, who continued the quarrel with the Archbishop. Louis did not live long enough to do much harm, for he died in 987. With the exception of Charles of Lorraine, the Carolingian line was extinct.

The election of Hugh Capet (987)

It was sufficiently clear that a "king without land, in a country where all wealth and authority rested upon land, was a paradox." The House of Robert the Strong had shown itself capable and was undoubtedly wealthy, although Hugh Capet had been forced to part with considerable territory in carrying out his policy of control. The situation in 987 was strikingly similar to that in 751; in both cases a powerful family held the actual control, while the title of royalty was possessed by a line which had lost its capacity for kingship and whose wealth had diminished almost to the vanishing point. The anomaly was too glaring to be continued. Backed by the Archbishop of Rheims, Hugh Capet was elected King of France at Compiègne and consecrated at Noyon in 987. Only an insignificant section of the nobility supported the claims

of Charles of Lorraine. The Carolingian dynasty had come to an end!

The dreary story of decay and dissolution must be repeated for Italy. Native leaders, such as Guy of Spoleto and Berengar of Friuli, struggled for the Italian crown. The papacy, solicitous for its territories and jealous of its power, feared an Italian king of Italy and sought to minimize the danger by supporting foreign candidates as it had favored Pepin and Charlemagne against the Lombards. So it offered the crown to Arnulf of Germany and invited Rudolf II of Burgundy to oppose Berengar and Hugh of Arles to oppose Rudolf. As a result, the throne of Italy was a possession of doubtful value; the Italian nobles enjoyed the independence of petty princes, and the many towns developed with little restraint beyond that imposed by their bishops.

Chaos in Italy

In all this desolate period since the death of Charlemagne, the Church stood out as the one institution which had not decayed. Indeed, it had increased in power and prestige as the other elements of society withered or were transformed. Something of culture, too, continued in a world of undeniable grayness. There were learned men at the court of Charles the Bald, of whom the greatest was John the Scot. Gottschalk speculated in a disturbing manner upon the implications of the Augustinian doctrine of predestination; Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, upheld the moral dignity of the Church and has given, in his extensive writings, a strong picture of those dark days when brigandage "was no longer considered a crime"; and, as the tenth century drew to a close, Gerbert, *scholasticus* of Rheims, demonstrated that Science still had its followers.

Society in the ninth and tenth centuries

The papacy continued its advance to complete control over the Church and strengthened its claim to dispose of the imperial crown. Louis the Pious, Lothar, Louis II, Charles the Bald, Charles the Fat, and Arnulf of Germany without exception received their consecration at the hands of a Pope, and all but Louis the Pious journeyed to Italy for that honor. Hincmar of Rheims excommunicated Lothar II for abandoning his queen (Theutberga) and for attempting to procure a divorce upon insufficient grounds. Rome supported the Archbishop, and the Emperor was obliged to restore his wife to her title and dignity if not to his affection. Nicholas I deposed the bishops of the important cities of Trèves and Cologne for disobedience. In these days appeared the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*, a French compilation of documents, partly forged and partly au-

The Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals

thentic, based on an earlier Spanish collection of genuine acts of councils and papal decrees, the object of which was to free diocesan bishops from a too rigorous subjection to their metropolitans. This compilation included the famous "Donation of Constantine," in which "the papal supremacy was stated in an unqualified form. The Pope is set as a Prince exalted above all the priesthood of the entire world, and all arrangements for the advancement of the worship of God and the establishment of the christian faith are placed at his disposal."¹

The increasing prominence of the papacy in temporal and spiritual matters owed much to Nicholas I (858-867), who with Gregory I has acquired the titles of Saint and Great. Nicholas is a singularly attractive figure in an age poor in likable characters — handsome in appearance, unusually well educated, virtuous, and a thoroughly genuine champion of the poor and the oppressed. He has been somewhat harshly judged for his aggressive interference in matters of temporal concern and his vigorous assertions of papal authority. It is true that he did concern himself with affairs of State and sternly rebuked the Emperors of the East and West for conduct deserving stern rebuke. But in so doing he established no precedent and did no more than Gregory I had done before him. He stated that kings were subordinate to the Pope in the spiritual order, but no one thought of questioning this statement. As had his predecessors, he claimed the right to confirm all acts of councils, he asserted the position of the Bishop of Rome as the head of the Church with jurisdiction over all bishops and lesser clergy and as "the supreme ruler of man's spiritual destinies."² Nicholas I stands out, not because he urged original or impudent claims, but because he energetically enforced claims which earlier popes had made and men had long accepted, and enforced them at a time when a society in dissolution needed as much spiritual and moral guidance as it could get.

Taken by and large, the ninth and tenth centuries were the darkest of the Middle Ages. Society was in a state of dissolution; yet dissolution is but change, and with the eleventh century a new Europe emerged from the apparent chaos, a Europe which was beginning to find itself and to advance along a path of progress from which it has never receded.

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, pp. 638-639.

² Mann, H. K., *History of the Popes*, III, p. 7.

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CHAPTER XI

THE SAXON EMPIRE

The tenth century

WHILE France and Italy were experiencing an almost unparalleled political chaos which brought with it the collapse of central government and the dislocation of society, Germany was acquiring a political order and a territorial unity which permitted the establishment of the strongest and most permanent of medieval states. The tenth century, so black for France and Italy, so discouraging for commerce and industry, and so unfavorable for culture, was, for all that, the century in which three movements began that were to affect the history of Europe throughout the Middle Ages. In that century occurred the definite separation of France and Germany as nations, which allowed for the freer growth of national characteristics in each. In the same century began that association of the German kingship with the revived Roman Empire which lasted until Napoleon swept it away in 1806. And in that century the German rulers inaugurated their policy of interfering in the affairs of the Church, and particularly those of the papacy, which was continued until the Reformation. To these three might be added a fourth, for in the year 910 William of Aquitaine founded a monastery at Cluny, from which went forth a spirit of reform that penetrated every rank of society.

The Carolingian Empire had declined, in part because the strength of the Empire depended upon the personal ability of its ruler and no capable successor to Charlemagne had appeared; in part as the result of the Frankish practice of dividing the inheritance among sons; in part through the inroads made by the Northmen; and in part through the extension of the privileges of the *beneficium* by the great ones and the practice of *commendation* by the man who needed a protection which the State was unable to provide. If the *fact* of Empire disappeared in the confusion of the ninth century, the *idea* of Empire remained and was fostered by the Church, whose interests embraced all Christendom and whose strength lay in uniformity of observance and universal obedience to a single recognized head. That an Empire once more appeared was due to the support of the

Church; that it appeared in Germany was due to Saxon vigor and the absence of serious rivals.

Germany presented many contrasts to France. It had never supported the idea of monarchy with any show of enthusiasm, and while the Germans had submitted to the rule of the Carolingians, they were much more attached to their tribal leaders. The Carolingian system of government in all its completeness had not been extended east of the Rhine. The country was roughly divided into five sections comprising Saxony, Franconia, Swabia, Thuringia, and Bavaria. Each of these divisions was subject to the immediate control of a duke who, although bound by oath of obedience to the king, was in fact — and so far as the people thought of it at all, even in theory — the real ruler of his territory. The duke bore a much closer resemblance to the old tribal leader than to an officer of the crown, and his position was a thoroughly popular one. The fact that feudalism with its decentralizing tendencies had made far less progress in Germany than in France enabled the duke to exercise direct control over a larger number of subjects than was possible in the Western kingdom. Instead of the numberless districts, partly or completely independent of the sovereign, five duchies represented the obstacle to territorial unity. On the other hand, there were no unifying factors beyond the shadowy conception of Empire (which had not yet become associated with Germany) and the essential unity of the Christian Church.

After the death of Louis the Child in 911, Conrad, Duke of Franconia, had been honored with the title of king, but had been unable to exercise more than a nominal authority beyond the limits of his own duchy. Upon his death in 918 the title passed to Henry, surnamed "the Fowler," Duke of Saxony. The choice of Henry was the work of the great ones of Franconia and Saxony (who seemed to concur in the judgment of the dying Conrad that "the future of the realm rested with the Saxons"), and without the representation of Swabia or Bavaria. No ecclesiastical ceremony accompanied the election and no consecration, or even coronation, bestowed upon the king the "divinity that doth hedge." Henry himself had no visions of imperial grandeur, yet he was not content to remain a king in theory but a duke in fact. Two tasks faced him — to unite the five "stem duchies" into a political entity and to free the German peoples from the ravages of the Hungarians. To both of these problems he devoted himself with energy, and the

*The situation
in Germany*

*The position
of the Dukes*

*Henry "the
Fowler"
(919-936)*

*Henry and
the "stem
duchies"*

Swabia

Bavaria

*The danger
from the
Hungarians*

Empire which lasted from 962 to 1806 marks the measure of his success.

Henry recognized the necessity of checking and controlling the forces of disintegration and of preventing the duchies from evolving into kingdoms. He could rely upon Saxony. This duchy, which extended from the Rhine to the Elbe, was a most suitable home for a new dynasty. The Saxons had retained more tribal unity than any other Teutonic people; they had had little or no contact with Roman civilization and possessed the sturdy vigor of a free agricultural people whose politics and social life had not been disturbed by the spread of cities and towns. Franconia was friendly to Saxony and had shared in Henry's election. A swift advance into Swabia resulted in the submission of the duke, who was permitted to retain his position upon recognizing Henry as his superior and upon surrendering to the king the right to make all official appointments within the duchy. Bavaria was less tractable, for it had once been the center of the Empire and the ruling duke had even thought of seeking the crown for himself. But the duchy had been overrun and the population nearly exterminated by an invasion of the Hungarians (Magyars) in 907. Further, while the duke was highly popular with laymen, he had incurred the hostility of the Church by his extensive appropriation of Church property. In 921 Henry besieged Regensburg and, by offering very favorable terms, procured the duke's submission. In return for recognizing Henry's authority, the duke retained his duchy, the right to appoint bishops, to determine his own foreign policy, and to utter his own coinage. The civil war in France (923-925), between Charles the Simple and Robert, Count of Paris, gave Henry an opportunity to become master of Lorraine, which henceforth became an integral part of Germany and took the place of Thuringia among the five stem duchies.

The Treaty of St Claire-sur-Epte had put an end to the raids of the Northmen, but another great menace appeared in the east with the Hungarians. This terrible people, who had moved from the Black Sea and had established themselves upon the southeast frontier of Germany at the close of the preceding century, bore a striking resemblance in physique, in customs, and in ferocity to the wild followers of Attila. A race of mounted nomads, living only for war and the spoils of war, they spread devastation wherever they went, and the tales of their cruelty aroused universal horror and fear. In 924 they raided Germany. Henry shut himself up in a

fortress and, having had the good fortune to capture one of the invading chieftains, negotiated as his ransom a nine years' truce. But so little real unity did Germany yet possess, that this truce applied only to Saxony and Thuringia.

*The nine
years' truce*

The nine years were used to advantage. The Hungarian raids had revealed two things plainly: that mounted raiders could only be opposed successfully by mounted defenders, and that walled towns were reasonably secure against wild, barbaric fury. Henry set to work to reorganize his Saxon army and to build places of refuge. Neither task was easy, for the Saxon army, like the Anglo-Saxon *fyrd*, was an infantry force alone, composed of freemen and mobilized only at need. It was impossible to create a cavalry force out of what was essentially a militia. In this difficulty Henry turned to his *ministeriales* (men employed in personal or official service by Henry whether as duke or king), and from these he formed the nucleus of his new army. As Saxony was innocent of cities and almost innocent of towns, and as its straw-hatted peasantry lived in scattered villages, Henry not only had to build towns but also compel people to live in them. A monastery or a fortress had hitherto served as a place of meeting. Henry required that one out of every nine families should devote itself to the construction of fortified places as centers of all group activities, while the remaining eight families should contribute one-third of their agricultural produce for the maintenance of the builders and the establishment of a reserve in the event of invasions. In this way many of the old Rhine forts were repaired; new ones constructed throughout Saxony; Merseburg, Goslar, and Gandersheim re-fortified; and Quedlinburg and Phölde established. Special military districts, the "Marks," were created along the eastern boundary.

*The
ministeriales*

The new organization was soon put to the test. The Wends, placed between the Elbe and the Oder, had been uncertain neighbors since the days of Charlemagne. Henry subdued these troubrous people (928-932) and created the Mark of Brandenburg to hold them in check. He next turned against the Bohemians and, with the assistance of Arnulf of Bavaria, besieged Prague and compelled "good King Wenceslas" (the first Christian king of Bohemia) to recognize the superior authority of the German king and to pay tribute for his dominions.

Conquest

The truce with the Hungarians expired in 933, and upon the refusal of Henry to renew the tribute (rumor has it that Henry replied

*The battle on
the Unstrut
(933)*

to the demand by throwing a dead dog into the enemy's camp), the Hungarians poured into Thuringia and Saxony. The new Saxon army, strong in its organization, trained in the recent campaigns, and fresh from victory, overwhelmed the invaders near Merseburg (933). In the north, the Danes who had penetrated beyond the boundary set by Charlemagne were forced to surrender the land between the Schlei and the Eider, out of which Henry created the Mark of Schleswig (934). Henry lived on another two years, consolidating the work he had begun and furthering the interests of the Church by the conversion of the Slavs and the foundation of a church and a nunnery at Quedlinburg.

Henry the Fowler is worthy of the highest respect. He did not seek the reverence paid by subjects to an anointed king, but by his ability as a military organizer and as a leader of men he won the respect and obedience due to a defender of his people. He did not waste his resources upon vast schemes, however noble, but applied himself to the demands of the moment. He held the stem duchies to the German throne, added Lorraine to the German kingdom, forced the Wends and the Bohemians to recognize German dominion, liberated Germany (for a while at least) from Hungarian inroads, and by so doing laid the foundations upon which his greater son erected the Empire.

*The work of
Henry*

*Otto the
Great
(936-973)*

At Henry's death in 936 the crown passed without opposition to his eldest legitimate son, Otto. The success of the father inspired the ambition of the son, and the difference between the two reigns is symbolized by the formalism which surrounded the elevation of the new ruler. Whereas Henry had neither received nor desired the ceremonial of coronation or the ritual of consecration, and had been content with a simple election at Fritzlar, Otto was the central figure in an elaborate pageant. The very place where the ceremony was held, Aix-la-Chapelle, was enough to recall the glory of Charlemagne and the splendor of Empire. To the coronation came the dukes of every duchy and the leading ecclesiastics of the newly united kingdom. The Archbishop of Mainz girded the king with a sword, saying: "Take this sword, and with it drive forth the enemies of Christ, the heathen and the evil Christians, since, by God's will, the rule over all the lands of the Franks has been entrusted to you for the lasting peace of all Christians." Otto was then anointed with holy oil, that men might know the sanctity of kingship. At the great banquet which followed the coronation the dukes performed

personal service: the Duke of Lorraine served as chamberlain; Eberhard of Franconia as steward; Herman of Swabia as cupbearer, while Arnulf of Bavaria acted as marshal, taking care of the horses of the visitors and assigning the places where they might pitch their tents.

This ceremonial was highly significant and marked the change which had taken place since the days of Conrad of Franconia. The presence of the four great dukes was "a public recognition of the union of the German tribes" and sufficient evidence that the royal power was no longer confined to a local duchy. The performance of personal service by the dukes was not only consistent with old Teutonic practice, but represented clearly enough Otto's own ideas as to the status of the ducal office. Under Henry the dukes had governed their territories pretty much as they liked, and the king had not insisted upon more than a recognition of his superior authority. Otto was not content with this, nor was he satisfied with the mere formality of nominal service performed by ducal families who escaped effective control under the convenient claim of hereditary tenure. In his opinion (which the learning of his capable brother, Bruno, later Archbishop of Cologne, may have confirmed) the dukes were primarily crown officers, governing their duchies under the king and in his name.

This view, which Otto at once made part of his domestic policy, threatened the comfortable autonomy of the dukes and precipitated a series of revolts which nearly succeeded in undoing the work of Henry the Fowler. The years 937-939 were critical ones for the new kingdom. The dukes found allies in the royal family itself, for Otto's half-brother Thankmar ignored his own illegitimate birth and urged his claim to the throne by reason of his seniority, while his younger brother Henry with philosophic subtlety presented *his* case on the grounds that Otto had been born the son of a mere duke of Saxony, whereas he (Henry) had been born in the purple of German kingship. Even Saxony wavered in its allegiance, for Otto had intrusted the administration of that duchy to two men, Billung and Gero, whose social status was sufficiently modest to arouse the scorn of the well connected.

Faulty coöperation on the part of the rebels and surprising victories at Xanten and Andernach put an end to the uprisings of the dukes and the royal brothers. To avert similar troubles in the future, Otto made a fundamental change in the system of ducal

*The beginning
of a new era*

*Family
quarrels*

*Reorganiza-
tion*

Otto's family system

administration — a change which was made easier by the deaths of the four dukes who had attended the coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle. By the new arrangement both Saxony and Franconia were placed under the immediate authority of the king; Bavaria was given to the now repentant Henry, who married the daughter of the late duke, thereby continuing the older tribal tradition; Swabia was entrusted to Otto's eldest son Liudolf, who, like his uncle, married into the former ducal family; and Lorraine was bestowed upon Conrad the Red, who married Otto's daughter Liutgarde.

Otto was obviously attempting to unite the stem duchies by bringing them all into the family, a policy which had its defects as well as its advantages. The marriages of Henry and Liudolf kept alive the remembrance of the days when Swabia and Bavaria had been ruled by local families rather than by a Saxon house, and there was always the danger of family jealousy, the risk of disloyalty, and the uncertainty of death. Above the dukes, Otto placed a supervising officer, the Count Palatine, or *Pfalzgraf*, to act as his representative in judicial matters, to take charge of the royal forts and other crown property, and to be responsible for the collection of the revenue. The *Pfalzgraf* was an extremely unpopular individual; the dukes resented his administrative interference, while the people regarded him as a crafty, self-seeking official, unsympathetic with, if not actually hostile to, revered tribal customs and traditions. In the folk tales and especially in the "beast-epics" he appears as the fox with all the proverbial traits of that unpleasant animal.

The Count Palatine

Administrative reform

The statesmen-bishops

For nearly fifteen years Otto's family system held the duchies together, in at least an artificial unity, and gave opportunities for improving the machinery of the central government. The Church, with its unparalleled facilities for reaching the people, had been one of the most valuable assets of the Carolingian Empire, and Otto (influenced by his brother Bruno?) made effective use of the opportunities presented by that organization. He employed ecclesiastics in the business of State administration and even granted to bishops powers ordinarily reserved for the counts. The work of the central government was very largely in their hands, and the "statesman-bishop" who emerged from the training received at the royal chancery represented the close alliance between Church and State. But Otto favored the Church, not only because it provided him with educated officials and an invaluable addition to his military forces (in a campaign of the year 981 bishops and abbots supplied 1504

out of the 2000 attendant horsemen), but also because he was eager to promote Christianity as such, for he interested himself in establishing missionary bishoprics, such as those of Schleswig, Brandenburg, Magdeburg, and Quedlinburg, for the more effective reduction of the Danes and Slavs. This close affiliation with the Church was a powerful factor in the establishment of the Saxon dynasty, bringing religious motives to the support of crown policy and adding its spiritual weapons to the government's means of maintaining internal order.

Otto had not been able to devote his whole time to the suppression of ducal and fraternal rebellions, nor could he give undivided attention to the reorganization of Germany when the civil wars had come to an end. The countries along the eastern frontier had once more to be subdued, while Lorraine with its strong Carolingian sympathies maintained a doubtful loyalty and involved Otto in much diplomacy and occasional invasions into France.

In 951 took place the first of the German (as distinct from tribal) invasions of Italy, an event which was to inaugurate a policy of intervention and conquest lasting until the end of the nineteenth century. Italy had passed through a half century of civil wars, precipitated by rival claimants (mostly foreign) to the Italian crown, while the papacy was represented by weak and even vicious puppets set up by rival Roman families. Hungarian raids in the north and Saracen ravages along the coasts added to the confusion and increased the distress. The story of the Italian kingship from the days of the Emperor Lambert (who died in 898) to the coming of the Germans is a weary tale of plot and counterplot, of kings who could not control their subject marquises and counts, and of foreign adventurers who hoped to make capital out of Italian distress. The weak and mild Berengar of Friuli was overthrown in 900 by a plot which established the incapable Louis of Provence upon the throne. Five years later Berengar was restored, and remained a titular but ineffective king until a revolt caused him to make way for Rudolf II of Burgundy, in 922. Rudolf lasted for another five years when the disaffected or ambitious magnates called in Hugh of Provence.

Hugh was stronger than any of his predecessors, partly by reason of his political astuteness which bordered upon the Machiavellian, partly by his negotiation of strategic marriages, and partly because of the support of the nobles whom he brought with him from Provence and whom he rewarded with generous grants of land. For

*The first
Italian journey
(951)*

*Troubled
waters*

Adelaide nineteen years he was able to survive the many plots engineered by the Italians, "who loved to have two kings that they might pit one against the other." But in 945 an Italian candidate for the crown appeared in Berengar II of Ivrea, who so far succeeded that Hugh was glad to return to Provence, with the treasure he had amassed, on condition that his son Lothar be regarded as joint king with Berengar. Lothar died in 950 under circumstances which encouraged the suspicion of murder. He left a widow, the young and beautiful Adelaide. This lady was dangerous to the assured position of Berengar, for not only might she serve as a rallying point for the supporters of Lothar, but she was also the sister of young King Conrad of Burgundy, who in turn was the vassal of Otto the Great. Berengar imprisoned his beautiful enemy but she made her escape to Canossa. Her beauty, her distress, and her claim to the kingdom of Italy appealed to the chivalry and the ambition of the German king.

Otto, King of Italy (951) Henry of Bavaria and Liudolf of Swabia had already, in 950, attacked Berengar for their own ends, the first with some small success, the latter with none. In 951 Otto invaded Italy, rescued the young queen from her retreat at Canossa, married her, and as her husband claimed for himself the Italian crown, which a complacent Milanese archbishop bestowed upon him at Pavia. But he did not remain long in his new kingdom. Liudolf perhaps desired his father's bride for himself, or he feared that his own claims to the German succession might be endangered if she bore Otto a son. Whatever his reasons, he planned a rebellion in Germany, and Otto was obliged to return, leaving Conrad of Lorraine to deal with Berengar. Conrad quickly made terms with his opponent, bringing him back to Germany where, upon surrendering his crown, he received from Otto the kingdom of Lombardy as a fief.

Liudolf's civil war (953-955) The rebellion which broke out in 953 was of the utmost seriousness. Only the duchies of Saxony and Lorraine remained loyal to the crown, and Henry of Bavaria was the only duke who kept his faith to Otto. The curious thing is that in every duchy but Swabia the people sided against the dukes, whom they no longer regarded as tribal leaders but as the representatives of a centralized government. "The inception of the war may be traced to personal causes, to the personal jealousy of the leaders: its support, to the tribal opposition to the centralizing system of the dukedoms."¹ From

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, III, p. 198.

the start the war went very badly for Otto, and he was soon reduced to his own duchy of Saxony. The German kingdom might well have come to an end in the chaos of civil war had not the rebellion collapsed in the face of unexpected danger.

In 954 the terrible Hungarians took advantage of the internal disorder to invade Germany. The rebel leaders actually gave them support and a public reception at Worms on Palm Sunday! But the Hungarians passed westward across the Rhine and left the rebels to bear the deserved resentment of the people. Without popular support the dukes were helpless; one by one they made their submission and Otto was once more a king in fact. In 955 the Hungarians reappeared, but none of their supporters of the year before dared tender his alliance. The invaders had advanced as far as Augsburg when Otto, supported by a united Germany, approached with his army. The two forces met along the bank of the river Lech, and after a desperate encounter in which the rebel Conrad proved himself a hero the Hungarians were utterly routed and ceased to be a terror to Europe.

The rebellion of 953-955 put an end to Otto's family system of dukes, although his loyal brother Henry retained Bavaria and another brother, Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, was given the duchy of Lorraine. Swabia was granted to a representative of the old ducal line. For the future, Otto placed his main reliance upon the leading churchmen and raised his illegitimate son, William, to the great archi-episcopal see of Mainz.

In 961 Otto returned to Italy in response to the general dissatisfaction caused by Berengar's administration and to an appeal for assistance from Pope John XII, "a dissolute boy whose pontificate was a glaring scandal." Otto's invasion was a triumphal march; Berengar was deserted by his followers and fled, and Otto made his way to Rome where he demanded and received the imperial crown. He promised to protect the Church and the papal territories, but obtained in exchange an oath of fealty from the Pope and the right to confirm all future papal elections. No sooner had Otto left Rome than John XII regretted his lost liberty and entered into treasonable correspondence with Otto's enemies. This, and the notorious profligacy of the Pope, induced the Emperor to procure his deposition and the election of someone of purer life and greater obedience. He returned to Rome, and at a synod held on December 4, 962, John XII was deposed, and a layman who was rushed through the

*The
Hungarian
invasion*

*The battle of
the Lech
(955)*

*The second
Italian journey
(961)*

necessary priestly orders was elected, as Leo VIII. But the Romans resented this foreign interference, and when Otto once again left the city John was able to return. The young debauchee died in 964, and the Romans, again rejecting the Emperor's Pope, chose a man of recognized piety, as Benedict V. Otto, incensed at the dual insult to himself and his Pope, once more returned to Rome, sent Benedict to Germany, and reinstated Leo.

The revival of the Empire

"In this way Otto the Great brought into existence the Romano-Germanic Empire of the West, or, to give it its later and convenient name, the Holy Roman Empire, compounded by a union of the German kingdom with the *Regnum Italicum* and the dignity of the Roman Emperor."² But Otto never attempted to rule Italy as an integral part of the Empire. He allowed it to retain its own laws and instituted a separate administrative system, delegating the control almost equally between the great laymen and ecclesiastics, each group acting as a check upon the other. The cities were normally under the charge of the bishops, and this exclusion of lay domination smoothed the way to the civic independence which burst forth in the next century.

Otto I and south Italy

For the rest, Otto made an attempt to conquer southern Italy, but the resistance of the East Romans, or Byzantines, prevented him from conquering more than the duchy of Capua-Benevento. His southern campaign naturally brought him into difficulties with Constantinople, difficulties which he tried to resolve by seeking a Grecian princess for his young son and successor, Otto II. In this he was assisted by a "palace revolution" at Constantinople, and in 972 Otto II was married to Theophano, stepdaughter of the East Roman Emperor, John Tzimisces.

Estimate

Otto the Great survived this marriage only a year, for he died at Memleben May 7, 973. He was one of the greatest of the medieval emperors. He did not succeed in consolidating the German dukedoms, but he prevented their disintegration. He revived the *fact* and the *idea* of Empire which continued throughout the Middle Ages, and by his conception of the Emperor as the Protector of the Church bound the fortunes of the papacy to the history of Germany. He united the kingdoms of Germany and Italy, but whether for good or ill is highly conjectural. He took great interest in the Church, building churches, founding monasteries, and furthering the spread of Christianity among the Slavs to the east and the Danes to the

² *Camb. Med. Hist.*, III, p. 164.

north. He saved his kingdom from internal revolution and defended it from invasion and by the foundation of a chain of Marches, provided a starting point for the eastward expansion of the Germans which was the counterpart of the great "Wandering of the Nations" to the west.

Otto II had been accepted and crowned as king of Germany before his father's death and succeeded to his position without opposition. The new king had ability, but he was not as representative of the German nation as his father and grandfather had been before him. His marriage with Theophano added Eastern influences to the Burgundian and Italian traits he had inherited from his mother, Adelaide. The first seven years of his reign were occupied with strictly German problems. The desire for independence from central control was not extinct in the duchies. Swabia had been the principal menace under Otto the Great; Bavaria was to fill that rôle under his son. Henry of Bavaria, whose loyalty to Otto I had been conspicuous in an age of disloyalty, had died and left his widow, Judith, to govern the duchy in the name of his son, Henry the Quarrelsome. Judith also exercised considerable influence over Swabia, for her daughter had married the aging Duke Burchard, who stood at the head of a traditional ruling family. There was obvious danger of a combination of these two southern duchies which could not only block the way to Italy and the imperial crown, but might also be strong enough to limit the control of the king to the three northern duchies of Saxony, Franconia, and Lorraine. Otto II was aware of this menace, and upon the death of Burchard (973) he intrusted Swabia to his nephew, Otto, son of his half-brother Liudolf. Judith was enraged and urged her son to avenge the slight placed upon the family. Despite the support of the Bohemians the rebellious Henry was defeated, deprived of his duchy, and imprisoned, while Judith retired into a nunnery.

No sooner had the Eastern troubles been ended than Otto's attention was called to the West. Once more a French king, Lothar, attempted to recover Lorraine, and by a swift advance did succeed in capturing Aix-la-Chapelle, where he turned toward the east the brazen eagles of the palace, that all men might see in which direction his domain extended. His success came to an end with this symbolic gesture. Otto II advanced with an army, recovered the Carolingian capital, reversed the eagles, gazed upon Paris from the heights of Montmartre, and, having gazed, returned to his own kingdom.

*Otto II
(973-983)*

Germany

Italy As Germany now seemed quiet enough to permit an Italian journey, Otto crossed the Alps in 980 and received the imperial crown. But Otto had ambitions to complete the conquest of southern Italy which might be regarded as Theophano's dowry. He advanced with courage but without caution, captured Bari and Taranto, but was overwhelmed in Calabria and barely escaped with his life. This disaster was the signal for outbreaks in Germany: and the Wends and Slavs seized the opportunity to overrun the Eastern Marches, taking the towns of Brandenburg and Hamburg and undoing for another century the work of Otto I.

Otto II made his way slowly northward, but disappointment and the Italian climate had broken his spirits and health. He died at Verona in 983. He was far less able than his father, but he had shown a desire and an ability to maintain the dignity of the German kingship. If he succumbed to the lure of Empire, it was a weakness which nearly every German king who came after him also possessed, and none more strongly or fantastically than the three-year-old infant he left as his heir and successor, Otto III.

The struggle for the succession The death of Otto II was the signal for Henry of Bavaria to give further justification for his title, "the Quarrelsome." He effected his release from prison and stepped forward ostensibly as the guardian of the infant king, but in all probability to secure the crown for himself. He found some support among the clergy and in King Lothar of France, who desired Lorraine. But Theophano was not to be so easily deprived of the regency. Her ideas were imperial and her energies equal to her ideas. Her personal character stood out in happy contrast to that of the wrangling Duke of Bavaria, and many, especially the churchmen under Willigis, Archbishop of Mainz, rallied to her support. Henry found himself outnumbered and with his usual bad grace surrendered to the queen-mother his claims of guardianship, although at the price of the restoration of his lost duchy.

Otto III (983-1002) The young king was unlike any ruler yet seen in the West. "He was more Byzantine and Roman than German, although in appearance he clearly revealed his origin." He had been brought up under the influence of the two Empresses, Adelaide and Theophano, and had been educated by churchmen. The concept of Empire as a Roman rather than a German Empire, and a Holy Roman Empire rather than a secular one, had been constantly held before him and,

indeed, well suited his imaginative and mystical temperament. He regarded himself as the "servant of the Apostles" and the "servant of Jesus Christ." His "mind was filled with glowing visions of a Kingdom of God on earth, in which the Pope and Emperor ruled in harmony over a world that enjoyed perfect peace and idyllic happiness."³

For this lofty consummation no place could be more fitting than Rome, at once the ancient home of the Cæsars and the present abode of the vicar of Christ. In 996 he intrusted Germany to the churchmen and the rulers of the Marches and set out for Italy. When he reached Ravenna news of the Pope's death was brought to him, and the Romans, weary of the domination of the family of Crescentius, which for the past twenty years had been treating the papacy as a family possession, begged Otto III to name a Pope for them. This seemed a favorable beginning for the Holy Roman Empire. Otto did not hesitate but appointed his own cousin, Bruno, a man eager for Church reform, who (as the first German Pope) took the name of Gregory V. At Rome, Otto received the imperial crown at the hands of his nominee.

Once Emperor he began the realization of his youthful ideals. He built his palace on the Aventine as a sign that Rome, not Saxony, was the Head of the World. He surrounded himself with all the splendor of the Orient, and his officials discovered that they were to be known by bewildering classical titles and were to sign their names in Greek characters as "evidence of culture." Seven churchmen formed a body known as the "Judges of the Palace" whose functions were to ordain the Emperor and to elect the Pope. In this grand, if visionary, scheme the Emperor was abetted or humored by Gerbert of Aurillac, his erstwhile tutor and the most amazing man of his time. In 999, when Gregory died, Gerbert was elevated to the papacy and took the name of Sylvester II (in honor of the new Constantine?).

But this imperial youth who embraced the world in his vision had a humbler side to his nature. As Emperor he might insist upon his right to rule the Church, but as an individual he felt the necessity of penance and humiliation. He shared the habitation and the austeries of Adalbert, the great missionary to Poland, and made a pilgrimage to his tomb at Gnesen when Adalbert had found a martyr's grave; he climbed Mount Gargano with naked feet and as a

*Otto III and
the papacy*

The court

*Otto III's
piety*

³ Tout, T. F., *Empire and Papacy*, p. 42.

penitent placed his crown in the hands of the holy hermit Nil and received his blessing.

This attempt to subordinate a scarcely unified Germany and an uncontrolled Italy to a visionary imperial theocracy was bound to fail. It had no other source of strength than an ideal which few could understand and fewer still appreciate. Germany and Italy seethed with discontent, Germany because neglected by its king, and Italy because subjected to a foreigner. Rome was in open rebellion, and the younger Crescentius had already set up an anti-pope, although he was later executed for his presumption. Only the death of the young idealist at the age of twenty-two (perhaps through subtle poisons mixed by the widow of Crescentius, though more likely through fever) prevented a general collapse of the imperial system.

Otto III died without heirs, and with him the direct line of the Saxon dynasty came to an end. It had accomplished much. Henry and the Ottos had created something of a unity from the congeries of tribes which had paralyzed the work of the Carolings. The tribal spirit continued but it was controlled. Henry and Otto the Great prepared the way for the great eastern expansion which was to Christianize and largely Germanize the Slavs and the Hungarians. More and more the German kings relied upon churchmen to carry out the supervision of the administration until, by grants of immunities and of market and toll rights, the German and Italian bishops became the most independent in Europe. Above all, the Ottonian period marks the revival of the Empire of the Romans. It may be true that Germany got nothing but prestige from this, and that for a thousand years she expended blood and gold in Italy for a hopelessly inadequate return. It may be that both Germany and Italy were delayed nearly a thousand years in perfecting their national unity. But there were advantages to the Roman revival. The papacy had fallen into a state of degradation from which only a revived Empire could withdraw her, for a theoretic World-State was the necessary counterpart to an effective *catholic* Church.

The Ottonian period is less grand in appearance than the age of Charlemagne, but it is scarcely less important. The tenth century is crude, but on the whole it marks an advance over the century that had gone before. When it began, education had been pretty well limited to the "palace school" of Charlemagne; at its end, learned men could be found everywhere. There was Bruno of Cologne, "who

so loved his books that he could scarce live apart from them"; there was his sister Roswitha, who was bold enough to attempt to be a Christian Terence and who wrote a series of *Comedies*, each with a (disconcerting) Christian moral; there was Ratherius of Verona, who wrote voluminously with a stylus dipped in gall; and, above all, there was Sylvester II, schooled in the south of France, educated in Spain, and so learned in non-Christian subjects that men were sure that he was in league with the Devil. This versatile genius used Arabic numerals, facilitated the study of mathematics by the improvement of the abacus, invented a clock worked on the principle of the pendulum, was credited (perhaps by those who accused him of the "Black Art") with the invention of an organ driven by steam, and discoursed on the subjects of *genera* and *species* with Uterich of Saxony.

Life was hard, but at least it was vigorous and unrestrained. Germany was still largely covered with forest and the few towns offered but little shelter. Yet there were indications that living conditions were improving: there was greater variety in house furnishings and softer beds with coverlets embroidered with gold. If one cares to credit the reports of preachers, he may conceive a society eager for new fashions of every kind. Pious churchmen disapproved of the new clothing which aped the costumes of the East, and they assailed those individualists who tried to set a vogue in sartorial extravagances. Men (and women) kept their hair closely clipped (in deference to the tonsured clergy) or let it grow to embarrassing length (in imitation of the ascetics). Jewelry and ornamentation found ever more admirers, to the dismay of sterner souls who feared a decay of the old Germanic virtue of simplicity. Those who could afford it kept their own harpists and minstrels, jesters and acrobats, to enliven their feasts, to provide music for the "round-dances" which were becoming very popular, or to break the monotony of long winter evenings. Poorer folk could trip it on the green or gather at the inn of an evening to listen to some wandering minstrel or stare amazed at the expertness of a juggler. Contemporary writers vie with each other in extolling the virtue or baring the shame of woman; proverbs betray her as the personification of unreliability, while the career of the hero of the *Ruodlieb* would indicate that the virtues which Tacitus had found in her ancestor had become but a memory.

Men revealed the startling contrasts of mood that were so charac-

Roswitha

Ratherius of Verona

Sylvester II

Society in the tenth century

Clothing

Music

Woman

Contrasts of mood

Christianity

teristic of the Middle Ages; the swift passage from ecstatic hopes of Heaven to the dreadful consciousness of unworthiness. Men were sensitive in those days and careless of the merits of self-control, but if they were "sudden in anger" they were quick to tears. Strong men wept with joy or gratitude, and princes howled throughout the night of defeat—and none looked on them with scorn. Christianity was still connected with paganism, much like the cross-crowned dolmens of Brittany. Henry the Fowler was eager enough to obtain a relic of the Crucifixion to threaten Rudolf of Burgundy with a patently unjust war; bishops and kings resorted to treachery and deceit in getting possession, or rid, of their enemies. But Christianity was clearly present, permeating every branch of society. There was considerable building of churches and chapels, there was a perceptible revival of asceticism and a definite interest in spreading the Gospel among the Slavs. The clearest sign of the break from paganism was the growing sense of conscience. Men might murder, but they paid penance as well as *wergeld*, and a duke of Aquitaine prayed for the souls of his victims as he slew them one after the other in battle. "David and Robert (of France) sinned, as is the habit of kings, but, visited by God, they confessed, wept and sighed."

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CHAPTER XII

THE SALIAN EMPERORS AND CHURCH REFORM

WITH Otto III the direct male line of the Saxon dynasty came to an end, and for the first time in nearly a century the elective principle came into effective operation. But the family of Henry the Fowler had strong claims on the German peoples for recognition of past services, and it was within this family that the chief candidates were to be found. The most natural person to succeed was Henry of Bavaria, son of Henry the Quarrelsome and the great-grandson of Henry the Fowler. No son could have been more unlike his father. The latter's political eclipse had rendered it most unlikely that the boy would receive much share of the royal favor, and in consequence he had been brought up with a view to a career in the Church. He was educated far above the standard of the laymen of his time and was particularly well read in ecclesiastical literature. He was a man whose purity in private life and whose unquestioned zeal for the Church won him the title of "the Saint." He had inherited considerable estates from his immediate family in Bavaria and from his Ottonian relatives in Saxony and Franconia. In Lorraine the Church was particularly influential and engaged in a reform movement with which Henry was in sympathy. This combination of character, landed wealth, and clerical support was too strong for Herman of Swabia, who represented the female line of the dynasty, and Henry acquired the throne, not by hereditary right alone but by the *election* of the principal magnates of the realm (1002). Another candidate, Ekkhard of Meissen, whose strongest claim was his ambition, fell a victim to private vengeance.

Henry was king, but the task before him was no simple one. Since 980 Germany had been much neglected by its rulers. The Slavs along the eastern frontier had either shaken off the German domination or were in a state of insubordination which approached independence. Within the kingdom the situation was hardly more encouraging. In the years when the last two Ottos were attempting the conquest of southern Italy or were pursuing the glamour of

*The election
of Henry of
Bavaria*

*Henry II
(1002-1024)*

*The German
problem*

Empire, the nobles, great and small, lay and cleric, were consolidating their holdings in the North and creating myriad districts in which they ruled supreme. The difficulties of the crown had facilitated this process, for Germany possessed no standing army beyond the freemen, who could be called into service for the defense of the realm, but who were neither available nor useful for military service beyond the Alps. For their Italian campaigns kings were dependent upon their own *ministeriales* (freemen or freedmen designed for military or domestic service) and such magnates as they could induce to accompany them. As in the Carolingian Empire, the support that did not derive from the crown or family estates had to be purchased, and the means of payment were land, immunities, and privileges. The crown suffered through this system which limited its territorial possessions and created areas independent of its jurisdiction. The dukes and other crown officials were theoretically appointed and removable by the king, but the double tendency toward hereditary tenure on the one hand and toward the association of office with the land on the other made it difficult if not impossible to prevent the son from succeeding to his father's title and estates. It was partly for this reason that the crown had favored the bishops and abbots, whose positions were not heritable.

Henry was endowed with great common sense and an appreciation of what was practicable. He knew that he was not strong enough to force the nobility or rich enough to purchase them, but he might *persuade* them. With this object he summoned frequent councils or "diets" and relied upon the soundness of his proposals and upon his own powers of conviction to gain their support. He was perhaps the first European monarch to make use of the arts of the politician.

The most pressing matter was the danger on the eastern frontier. King Stephen of Hungary was friendly enough, but Boleslav of Poland not only desired to rule over an independent kingdom but to extend his territory at the expense of his neighbors. Henry was successful in his first Polish campaign, but in 1014 he suffered defeat and was obliged to give up the district known as Lausitz, as a fief to the Polish king.

The death of Otto III without heirs had revived the principle of election in Italy as it had in Germany. Italy might admit its dependence upon the *Empire*, but it refused to be regarded as an appendage to the German *kingdom*. In the peninsula the factors which had favored Henry in the North were of no importance, and

Hungary

Italy

the Italian magnates had bestowed the crown upon Ardoine of Ivrea. In 1004 Henry crossed the Alps and in a whirlwind campaign scattered the forces of Ardoine and received the iron crown of Lombardy as the result of a reëlection by the Italian nobles. In 1013 he made a second journey to deal with the situation at Rome.

Rome

The death of Sylvester II (1003) had been the signal for civic disturbance. The family of Crescentius had been anti-imperial under Otto II; Otto III had been forced to execute a younger Crescentius for his attempt to set up a Pope in opposition to Leo VIII. To counterbalance the hostility of this family Otto III had given considerable power and had shown his favor to Gregory, Count of Tusculum, and this new house, deriving its position from the Empire, became the inevitable rival of the Crescentii.

*Tusculum
versus
Crescentii*

Reaction followed the Germano-imperial program of Sylvester II and his startling protégé. The family of Crescentius reappeared in power, taking advantage of Henry's continued presence in Germany, and, with the certainty of noninterference from Ardoine, established three successive Popes upon the chair of Peter (John XVII, John XVIII, and Sergius IV). In 1012 both Sergius IV and the head of the House of Crescentius died. The family chose another Pope, but the House of Tusculum took advantage of the leaderless condition of its rival to select a candidate and appealed to Henry II for his decision. Henry marched to Italy in 1013 and crushed the last feeble resistance of Ardoine who, in despair, retired into a monastery. Not until Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed King of Italy in 1861 did Italy have another native king. Henry proceeded to Rome, declared for Benedict VIII, the Tusculum Pope, and received the imperial crown. In 1021 Henry made a third and last journey to Italy, this time to complete the conquest of the South. Capua and Salerno were reduced to obedience, but the climate, ever fatal to invaders from the North, caused him to retreat. His last years were spent in Germany, where he died July 13, 1024.

*Henry and the
Church*

The most important aspect of Henry's reign is his relation to the Church. The policy of his predecessors, its recognized advantage, as well as his own training and inclinations, combined to make him rely upon churchmen rather than laymen. But Henry had no intention of becoming a "bishop's king," and he ruled the Church with a firm if sympathetic hand. Bishops and abbots were useful as councilors and as instruments of local government. It was essential for the good of the State that they be men of talent and ability; it

was necessary for the good of the Church that they be men of good character. Henry made unusually wide use of the power of appointment while approving the formality of election by monks or clergy, to give his choice a canonical sanction. His appointments were uniformly good and far better than those carried out under the interested pressure of local magnates.

The Church as a whole was in dire need of reform, and Henry eagerly supported the reform movement which, emanating from Cluny and Lorraine, was to sweep over Europe before the century closed and leave a shattered Empire in its wake. He encouraged Benedict VIII in his efforts to purify the Church by incorporating into imperial decrees the canons passed at synods and so making a rule of the Church a law of the State.

Henry II was a welcome and salutary successor to Otto III, and his practical policy, his recognition of the priority of German claims, and the general limitation of ends to means "repaired some of the havoc done by his predecessors." His support of the Cluniac movement was to have far-reaching effects, and his favors to the Church tended to render that body dangerous to, or independent of, the State. He was a severe moralist in his private life, and it was he who included in the laws of the Empire that harsh canon of a Spanish Council which, in order to enforce celibacy upon the clergy, condemned the *children* of clerics to slavery. Under Henry, Saxony and Lorraine gave way in importance to the southern duchies and harbored most of the discontent that troubled his successors.

Henry II died without heirs so that the electoral principle was once more invoked. However, no candidate outside the Ottonian family seems to have been considered and the choice fell upon Conrad, great-grandson of that Conrad the Red who had fallen gloriously at the battle of the Lech against the Hungarians. Conrad was strikingly unlike his predecessor; he had all of Henry's sense of the possible with none of his education or enthusiasm for Church reform. He was a stern realist, a warrior, and above all a diplomat, in many characteristics closely resembling Charles Martel. An orphan of relatively moderate means, he owed his election to his kinship with the Saxon dynasty and to the support of the Archbishop of Mainz, who feared the local effects of the reform program and who saw in Conrad a man unlikely to encourage, if he did not prevent, the spread of that movement.

The choice was a very wise one. The nobles of Lorraine, who

Henry II's character

The election of Conrad (1024-1039)

under the leadership of the reforming Archbishop of Cologne had opposed his election, were speedily reduced to submission. Saxony accepted him on condition that its own legal institutions be retained. The difficulties of his reign sprang from personal jealousy, Polish and Wendish aggression, and Italian disobedience. Within Germany the rebellion of his stepson, Ernest of Swabia, was long drawn out and at times serious. The trouble arose over the Burgundian inheritance. King Rudolf III of Burgundy, knowing that he was to die childless and wishing to prevent his kingdom from disintegration at the hands of ambitious relatives, had made Henry II his heir. The death of Henry II while Rudolf was still living appeared to render this disposition invalid. But Conrad, who had married Gisela, niece of the Burgundian king, declared that the bequest had been made to the Empire, not to the Emperor, and he successfully proved his assertion by the seizure of Basle. Ernest of Swabia, son of Gisela by a previous marriage, contested this interpretation and sought allies who would support his own claims to the Burgundian throne. King Robert of France, Eudes of Champagne, and a miscellaneous group of German malcontents were from time to time included in the rebellion. It failed and Ernest was driven, as an outlaw, into the Black Forest where, in his castle of Falkenstein, he lived the wild life of a robber baron, was killed in a petty skirmish, and became a legendary hero in Swabian folklore. Rudolf III died in 1032, and Conrad took over his kingdom for the Empire. This acquisition was of considerable importance, for Burgundy commanded the western passes through the Alps to Italy and formed a buffer state between that country and France. Further, it strengthened the tendency to hereditary succession in Germany and facilitated the spread of the Cluniac movement, which had its headquarters in the new kingdom.

While Conrad was occupied in the suppression of Ernest's rebellion and the acquisition of Burgundy, he had also been compelled to deal with Eastern problems. Mesco of Poland continued his father's aggressive policy and even invaded the Saxon Marches. By 1033 Conrad had recovered the Lausitz and had forced Mesco to recognize the supremacy of the German ruler. About the same time, Bohemia was reduced to submission by Conrad's son, Henry, whose title to succession had been recognized by the German nobles and who had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1028. The Wends to the north of Poland were defeated in a campaign and punished with atrocious

*The acquisition
of the
Arelate
(Burgundy)*

*Ernest of
Swabia*

*The eastern
frontier*

cruelty for their raids into Saxony. Conrad protected his northern frontier by marrying the young King Henry to Gunnhild, daughter of King Canute of Denmark.

Italy as usual demanded the attention of the German king. Upon the news of the death of Henry II the people of Pavia had burned the royal palace, symbol of foreign domination, and the Italian nobles had hastened to elect a non-German king. As no Italian was available or willing, they offered the crown to King Robert of France and, upon his refusal, to Count William of Aquitaine, who accepted on behalf of his son. The great churchmen of Lombardy, however, had experienced imperial favor and knew the value of imperial support against lay encroachment. The Archbishop of Milan had congratulated Conrad immediately upon his election and now proceeded across the Alps at the head of a considerable army to assist Conrad in keeping the French claimant out of Italy. In 1026 Conrad entered the peninsula, received the iron crown at Milan and the imperial one at Rome, at a gorgeous ceremony attended by Canute of Denmark and Rudolf of Burgundy. This splendid coronation was unfortunately marred by a bloody conflict between the German soldiers and the Roman populace (1027). Ten years later Conrad was again in Italy, this time to check the ambitious policy of the Archbishop of Milan, who was attempting to make himself lord of Lombardy. Milan resisted the assaults of the German army and Conrad was obliged to return to Germany.

The siege of Milan coincided with the promulgation of the *De Feudis*, a constitutional document of first importance and one which represents Conrad's policy of government. The estates of the great landowners had long been hereditary in fact, if not in law, but this principle had not been extended to tenants and subtenants, who were therefore at the mercy of their landlords. The Lombard disturbance had in part resulted from a resentment of the lesser nobles, *vavassors*, at this subjection to the greater, *capitanei*. To detach the lesser nobles from the Archbishop of Milan, Conrad decreed that *all* fiefs, great and small, upon imperial and ecclesiastical lands in Italy should be heritable and that no one should be deprived of his estate without the judgment of his peers in accordance with the law of the realm.

No such document exists for Germany, but there is a strong probability that Conrad favored the class of lesser nobles as valuable supporters of the crown against too great independence on the part

*Conrad called
to Italy*

*The
De Feudis*

*Conrad and
Germany*

of the powerful lords. In fact, while Conrad relied upon churchmen as councilors and administrators and favored them as counter-weights to the magnates, he also encouraged a new class of hereditary *ministeriales* chosen from the lower ranks of society and owing exclusive service to the crown. Again, all lesser nobles owed military service to the crown if they were given eighteen months' notice, and the followers of Ernest of Swabia had agreed to follow him anywhere "saving only against the Empire!"

Conrad showed considerable favor to the growing towns as well as to the lesser nobility. He was scrupulous in the administration of justice and the defense of personal and property rights. He did his best to maintain peace throughout his dominions that trade might flourish and men live without fear. He was generous in granting charters of privilege to the towns and in bestowing upon them the rights of coinage and the power to establish and regulate their own markets and tolls.

Administration The three main obstacles to the consolidation of the royal power had been the power of the magnates, the necessity of the Church alliance, and the tribal feeling in the duchies. The first two Conrad tried to lessen by placing ever more reliance upon the lesser nobles and upon the assistance which might be rendered by the towns, now beginning to assume a new importance in medieval life. To meet the third, Conrad fell back upon the family system of Otto the Great. Franconia he kept for himself; Bavaria, Swabia, and the March of Carinthia (cut off from Bavaria under Otto II) he gave to his son Henry. At the time of his death in 1039 Lorraine and Saxony were the only duchies not in the family.

Summary Conrad was a great king. Under him the royal power was for the first time solidly established; Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia once again recognized German supremacy; the Empire was increased by the addition of Burgundy, and the particularism of the duchies was checked if not destroyed. He has been accused of hostility to the Church, and it is true that, like Charles Martel, he increased the royal revenue by the revocation of earlier grants or by the actual confiscation of Church property and that he assisted the secularization of the Church by his sale of ecclesiastical offices. But he also made generous grants to the Church, and "the ruins of the picturesque Benedictine abbey of Limburg and the magnificent cathedral of Spires remind us that the thoughts of Conrad . . . sometimes rose above things merely temporal."¹

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, III, p. 271.

The young king who succeeded his father in 1039 had been well equipped in education and training for the part he was to play. His mother, Gisela, was devoted to the Church and had been at particular pains to give him a good education, so that it was said of him that he was "the most learned of kings." His father had associated him in the kingship since his eleventh year, had taken him upon his

Henry III
(1039-1054)



campaigns, and had intrusted to him the expedition against Bohemia. In many respects he resembled both of his immediate predecessors. He had his father's appreciation of an ordered imperial rule; like him he was a "man of fact and actuality" and not inclined to pursue visionary schemes improbable of attainment. He had Conrad's sense of justice administered without favor, for "the king's first duty is to keep the law." But he also had Henry II's sympathy with the Church and gave such impetus to the reform movement that its

Character

success ruined the fortunes of his house. Like Henry II he possessed a purity of character which made him respected, but he had also a severity of mien which could never make him beloved. Like Louis the Pious he never laughed and seldom smiled, and at the time of his second marriage (with Agnes of Poitou) he drove away the minstrels and entertainers who came to aid in the merrymaking. His countenance was so devoid of geniality and so forbidding that men called him "the Black."

Henry III ascended the throne without opposition, and while the peace of the State was constantly disturbed by private quarrels, encouraged in part by the favor which Conrad had shown to the lesser nobles, Germany as a whole was at peace. Henry inaugurated his reign by making a series of royal progresses through the realm (in itself a sign of established authority), dispensing justice and adjudicating disputes. For all matters of national importance he summoned the magnates, lay and cleric, to general "diets" or assemblies. Chief among these concerns was the situation on the eastern frontier. Poland was in temporary eclipse but torn by a state of anarchy scarcely less dangerous to the Western kingdom. Bohemia and Hungary were restless and therefore dangerous. By the unanimous consent of the assembled magnates it was decided to reduce these two countries to unquestioned obedience. Bohemia submitted in 1041, and by the battle of the Raab in 1044 the frontier between Germany and Hungary (later that between Germany and Austria) was determined until the end of the World War (1919). Henry's only other German difficulty came from Lorraine. Lorraine was the least German of all the duchies and had, because of its connection with France, the influence of its churchmen, and the growing importance of its trade, acquired a strength and a sense of independence which the German king could regard only with uneasiness. In 1044 the reigning duke died, and Henry, to weaken this powerful duchy and to bring it under stricter control, broke it in two. Godfrey, eldest son of the late duke, justifiably felt himself injured by the curtailment of his inheritance, and until his death he never ceased to plot, openly or secretly, against his King and Emperor.

Looking back upon the Middle Ages, the most important aspect of Henry's reign is his connection with the Church and particularly with the reform of the papacy. In 1046 he was called to Italy by a situation hitherto without precedent. The House of Tusculum had maintained the ascendancy acquired in 1012 and had kept the papal

Efforts to maintain order

The division of Lorraine (1044)

Henry III and the papal crisis

appointments in its power. In 1044 the rule of its nominee, Benedict IX, had grown intolerable, and a revolt of the citizens had opened the way for the Crescentian faction to reassert itself. It did so and established a Pope of its own who took the name of Sylvester III. Within a few weeks, however, the Tusculum family was again in power, Sylvester driven forth, and Benedict restored. But Benedict IX, either tired of his papal dignity, doubtful of his ability to maintain it, or anxious to marry and settle down, sold the papal see to his godfather, John Gratian, a man of reforming zeal and uprightness, who assumed the title of Gregory VI. The validity of this transfer being called into question by some and approved by others, the world was bewildered and the Church confounded by the spectacle of three popes!

*Benedict IX**Sylvester III**Gregory VI*

To deal with this situation which it was impossible to tolerate, Henry III came to Italy. At a synod which he summoned at Sutri (1046), Gregory and Sylvester III were deposed from office and Benedict was similarly treated at a Roman synod held a few days later. To prevent a recurrence of this scandal, Henry decided to take things into his own hands. Compelling the Romans to take an oath renouncing their rights of election to the papacy, he elevated the Bishop of Bamberg to the papacy as Clement II. Clement was the first of a series of German popes instituted by the Emperor before his death in 1056.

The Synods of Sutri and Rome

Henry was following in the footsteps of Otto the Great and Otto III, in thus deposing and setting up popes, but Henry's action was more in line with a definitely marked policy than had been the case with his predecessors. Henry intended an effective imperial control over the papacy. He was vitally interested in the whole question of Church reform; but with the hierarchical organization of the Church no reform could be effective which did not begin with the head.

The Church was in need of reform. The majority of the clergy shared the general superstition and intellectual darkness of the people. Many churchmen could neither read nor write and few of those who could understood the mysteries they propounded. The service of God was in danger of becoming a mere empty ceremonial. Churches falling to ruin were used as markets or even as threshing barns. "The garments of the priests were in tatters and the cloths of the altar rotted away by time or nibbled by mice." The ornaments of the churches were often pawned to weather a financial

The need of reform

crisis, given away to procure a favor or reward a mistress, or were appropriated for private advantage. The responsibility rested primarily upon the secularization of the offices held by higher churchmen, through their close attachment to the State. The principles of feudalism could not be prevented from reaching the Church, for the duties attached to land were so varied and so important that no lord however small, and no king however great, could be indifferent to the holder of Church property. The appointment of every functionary, from the greatest of the archbishops, bishops, and abbots to the least of the parish priests, was a definite matter of lay concern.

From these conditions had grown up the practice of lay appointment to ecclesiastical benefices, with or without the formality of election, a practice commonly known as "lay investiture." Connected with this evil were two others, simony and Nicolaitanism, and the three combined to form a truly vicious circle. Simony originally meant the purchase of grace, as Simon Magus had attempted to buy the "grace of God" from Peter, but it soon came to include the acquisition of Church property or office in return for money, favor, or the promise of advantage. When Church offices were attached to landed estates and brought not only wealth but the possibility of political influence, they were much sought after by the nobles as an addition to their revenue or influence or as a provision for their children. The Count of Toulouse (1037) gave the bishopric of Albi and "one-half the bishopric of Nîmes" to his wife as a wedding gift. The archbishopric of Narbonne had a market value of 100,000 solidi. The principle was so widely extended and so definitely established that in Milan each gradation of clerical preferment had its recognized price.

Nicolaitanism, or the marriage of the clergy, perpetuated these evils and tended, by extending the principles of inheritance to Church lands and offices, to create innumerable areas independent of adequate or effective control from above. Under the influence of lay investiture and simony the Church had become very worldly. We have Peter Damiani's picture of an eleventh century bishop as he "rode forth in full equipment like the war-chief of a heathen host and behind him came a mass of shield- and lance-bearers." A contemporary could say:—"The shepherds of the people are not truly shepherds but wolves." It was to reform these abuses that Henry had interested himself in the Cluniac movement and had purposed to control the papacy.

Lay investiture

Simony

Clerical marriage

In 910 William of Aquitaine founded a monastery at Cluny, in the diocese of Macon. It was not his intention to institute a new monastic order but to establish a monastery in which the Benedictine Rule would be strictly applied, for monasticism had fallen upon evil days. The ravages of the Northmen, Hungarians, and Saracens, the political unrest of the post-Carolingian period, and the seizure of monastic property by ambitious secular princes had reacted most unfortunately upon monastic morals, discipline, and zeal. The new abbey adopted the Benedictine Rule in all, or even more than all, its original severity. Its first abbots were long-lived men of great administrative ability, a combination which favored continuity of policy and insured discipline. By its charter it was declared free of all secular and ecclesiastical control, although Rome was asked to take it under its protection. Its influence was quick to spread, for it was on the main road from England and northern France to Italy and was much frequented by travelers and pilgrims. Many monasteries sought affiliation but the organization was kept intact by a system of centralized authority known as the "Congregation," in which the Abbot of Cluny remained the head of the entire body, the participating monasteries being presided over by priors and subject to the mother-house.

The main connection that Cluny had with the great reform movement was its reiterated insistence upon unqualified obedience and subordination to authority, for "obedience is better than sacrifice." The discipline at Cluny was of more than military severity; the hours of talking, the hours of silence, the very attitudes to be assumed in walking, standing, or sitting were regulated. It was this idea of the value and necessity of obedience, the realization that all order evolved from system and all chaos from the lack of it, that passed over to the secular clergy. By them it was applied to the relation of the priest to the bishop and finally of the bishop to the Pope. Herein lay its appeal to the papacy.

In the work of reform the problem was whether, "softened and enervated by the loss of a celibate clergy and held in base subjection by the great ones of this world by the bonds of simony, the Catholic Church was to be kept stamped in the mire by the iron heel of feudalism, or whether it was to arise and renew its youth by again forming a ministry at once strong through its celibacy and free through being gratuitously chosen for its merits."² A task difficult

The establishment of Cluny (910)

Its connection with reform

The reform problem

² Mann, H. K., *History of the Popes*, VI, p. 262.

enough, and one which could only be accomplished successfully from Rome. No reform could be effective or lasting unless Rome received complete recognition of her universal authority and unquestioned, unquestioning obedience. Henry, by rescuing the papacy from its humiliating subservience to the houses of Tusculum and Crescentius and by appointing a series of reforming popes, rendered an inestimable service to the Church — at the expense of his Empire. A strong papacy could not tolerate the interference of the State in ecclesiastical matters, and independence from lay control, already suggested by Cardinal Humbert, was essential to complete the reform.

Henry III's reforming activity

Under Henry III royal interference worked nothing but good. "Like Daniel he freed Rome from the claws of the Dragon; like Isaiah he overthrew the false altars and he drove the money-changers from the Temple." His reforming popes, particularly Leo IX, warred gloriously and for the most part successfully against the evils of simony and clerical marriage. The Emperor is unique as one who never received a penny in return for an appointment to a spiritual office and as the ruler who incorporated into the laws of the Empire the reforming canons of the Church. The third phase of the movement, the question of lay investiture or, in its broader aspect, the relation of Pope and Emperor, Church and State, was to be the unhappy heritage of his son.

Before Henry left Italy in 1047 he journeyed to the South, where his supremacy was recognized by all those not immediately subject to the East Roman Empire and where he, in turn, recognized the Norman Drogo as Count of Apulia. He paid one more visit to the peninsula in 1055, for his lifelong enemy Godfrey of Lorraine had just married Beatrice of Tuscany, forming a political combination which it was necessary to destroy.

The last years of Henry III

The last years of Henry III (he died in 1056) were years of diminishing greatness. His strong rule provoked opposition and "the great and small people murmured more and more against the Emperor." But no actual rebellion disturbed his reign and he died as he had lived, the strongest of the medieval emperors. His greatest contribution to Germany was his maintenance of an ordered imperial rule. He did his best to put an end to the evils of private warfare. About the year 980 the French clergy had attempted to enforce the "Peace of God," *Pax Dei*, an attempt to provide immunity from violence or spoliation to all peasants, traders, and non-

The "Peace of God"

combatants. The clergy of Aquitaine, under the leadership of Odilo of Cluny, had expanded this (c. 1039) into the "Truce of God," which prohibited warfare upon certain days and during certain seasons of the year. These attempts were purely ecclesiastical and, while the churches were under lay control, largely ineffective. Henry, pursuing the same object, adopted a different method. At the time of his marriage to Agnes of Poitou (1043) he issued a general pardon to all his enemies and urged his followers to do likewise. He repeated this injunction in Lorraine and in Saxony. It is impossible to determine how far they were effective. Compliance was voluntary, but as the king's displeasure was a thing to avoid it is probable that they did diminish private war and it is certain that they formed a precedent for the later *Landfrieden*. How well *Landfrieden* Henry's attempt to maintain peace throughout his dominions was appreciated may be gathered from the chronicler who states that he died October 5, 1056, and adds: "And with him died order and justice."

CHAPTER XIII

SWORD AND CROZIER

The evils of a regency

THE last years of Henry III's reign were deceptive in their outward calm, for there was much dissatisfaction and uneasiness which needed only the favorable circumstance of a child-king and a regency to transform latent into active opposition. Germany had grown restive under the severe rule of its great king, and the papacy, rejuvenated by the efforts of Henry III, felt the necessity of independence. The heir to the throne (Henry IV) was only six years old when his father died, and the government was officially intrusted to his mother, the pious Agnes of Poitou. Agnes was well intentioned but weak, a fatal combination. The government quickly passed into the hands of powerful prelates and ambitious nobles. The dominance of Bavaria and Swabia over the northern duchies continued, for to her supporter, Otto of Nordheim, she gave the first and to Rudolf of Rheinfelden the second. Agnes even lost control of her son's education, to which she contributed no more of her personal piety than a chronic disapproval of bathing. The little Henry IV was intrusted to the care of ecclesiastics, in particular to Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen, who substituted amusements and indulgence for the more thankless task of instruction.

The progress of reform

Difficulties appeared almost at once. Henry III had indeed raised the papacy from the degradation into which it had fallen, but the net result of his personal interest in reform and his conception of the imperial office was the transformation of "the highest dignity of the Church into an ecclesiastical organ of the German State." Henry III's attitude was not unlike that of Charlemagne, but the claims of papal authority set forth by Nicholas I and inherent in the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals had given the Church visions of an independent if not dominant position in which there was no room for German interference. With the death of Victor II in 1057 the series of German popes came to an end, and the papacy began its struggle for emancipation from German control.

The successor of Victor II was Stephen IX, whose selection had something ominous about it, for Stephen was the brother of that

Godfrey of Lorraine who had so vigorously opposed Henry III. His pontificate was a short one, for he died in 1058; but it is significant because the election was carried out without the slightest reference to the wishes of the German court, which indeed was not informed of the choice for nearly four months. The same neglect of German interests characterized the election of Nicholas II. Nicholas had been Bishop of Florence and was much indebted for his advancement to the support of Godfrey of Lorraine, who was now the most powerful layman in Tuscany.

*Stephen IX
(1057-1058)*

Nicholas II was Pope for rather less than three years (he died in July, 1061), but in 1059 he took part in three negotiations which amounted to a triple attack upon imperial claims. At a gathering of the clergy in Rome at Easter regulations were adopted for the management of future papal elections to obviate the possibility of rival popes and to eliminate lay interference. Upon the death of the pontiff, the cardinal-bishops (i.e., those ecclesiastics actually or nominally attached to the diocesan churches of Rome) were to agree upon a candidate whose name was then submitted to the clergy and people of Rome for formal approval. In making their choice, the cardinals were expected to find their candidate from among the Roman clergy, although this restriction might be waived if no suitable person could be found. The election must always be held in Rome unless the possibility of civic disturbance made it advisable for the cardinals to assemble elsewhere.

*Nicholas II
(1058-1061)*

*Electoral
reform*

The election of Stephen IX had ignored the rights of imperial confirmation granted to the Ottos; the Electoral Decree of 1059 left the Emperor little beyond the honorable privilege of assent. But if the German king had lost his influence so had the Roman populace, and it was necessary for the Church to find allies who would support it if either of the offended parties should seek to recover its lost position. Two such allies were found and as far apart in character as they were in geographic location.

Early in the century Norman adventurers had come to southern Italy in ever-increasing numbers. There they sold their services to the Lombard princes who were striving to maintain or increase their independence, and there they established themselves as permanent residents, largely as the result of the grant of the district known as Aversa by the Duke of Capua in 1030. The most famous of the later colonists were the sons of Tancred of Hauteville, who arrived in 1038 and by 1042 had made themselves masters of Apulia.

The Normans

The Norman penetration was the old story of the "Camel and the Tent." The people feared them little less than Saracens and sought for help against these rough conquerors. The citizens of Benevento put themselves under the protection of Pope Leo IX, who launched a campaign against the Normans in 1053. The expedition ended disastrously at Civitate. Leo was captured, being released only after he had bestowed his apostolic blessing upon his captors. The Normans crowned success with success. Under Robert Guiscard, another of Tancred's mighty sons, they extended their power over Calabria and Capua and proved themselves to be the strongest military force in Italy. But they were usurpers after all, and they realized the value of obtaining official recognition of their conquests. That power which would grant such recognition might be assured of their friendship. Nicholas II took the bold step of reversing the papal policy and of forming an alliance with the victors of Civitate.

*The battle of
Civitate
(1053)*

At Melfi, in 1059, he formally invested Robert Guiscard with the duchy of Apulia and to his brother Richard of Aversa he gave the title of Prince of Capua. In their turn the brothers acknowledged the Pope as their feudal suzerain.

*The Treaty of
Melfi (1059)*

In the North was Milan, the second city in Italy and in wealth and economic prosperity rivaling, if it did not surpass, Rome itself. Here in 1056 a reform party had sprung into existence, recruited in the main from the lower classes of society and bitterly opposed to the Milanese clergy, who were notoriously simoniacal and freely given to marriage. There is strong reason to suspect that this party owed its origin to Anselm, Bishop of Lucca, who in 1061 became Pope Alexander II on the death of Nicholas II. By its opponents the party was nicknamed the Pataria, or the "Ragamuffins." The relation between the clergy and the upper classes in Milan was exceptionally close, and an attack upon the one involved the interests of the other. The archbishop was an imperial nominee and suspected of simony. For three years the city had been disturbed by the direct methods of the Pataria, whose energies were further stimulated by the obvious friendliness shown by the Roman Church to its efforts at reform. When it is recalled that Milan was the primatical see of Lombardy, that its archbishop bestowed the Italian (not the imperial) crown, and that by its geographical position it could help or hinder a German invasion of Italy, it becomes clearer why Rome chose such a strange ally as the Pataria and why, when the time came to attack the evil of lay investiture, it made a

Milan

Pataria

test case of Milan, where a party loyal to Rome was in practical if revolutionary control of the city. The death of Nicholas II (1061) ended the period of preparation; the pontificate of his successor, Alexander II, revealed not only a firmer attitude of independence but an increasing boldness in enforcing its claims even in the face of direct imperial opposition.

The choice of a successor to Nicholas II brought the new electoral decree into operation for the first time. The reform party within the Church selected Anselm, Bishop of Lucca, who was a notorious opponent of the married and simoniacal clergy. It was a fortunate choice, for Anselm had the full support of the Milanese Pataria and as former Bishop of Lucca could rely upon the assistance of the powerful Godfrey of Lorraine and Tuscany. But Anselm, who took the title of Alexander II, did not obtain the papal throne without a struggle. The disgruntled Romans and the adherents of the imperial policy throughout Italy turned to the German court and requested a return to the old method of imperial nomination. At a council held at Basle in 1061 the wealthy Cadalus, Bishop of Parma, was elected as Pope Honorius II, and in the following spring he entered Italy at the head of an army and, though unable to take the entire city of Rome, succeeded in establishing himself in the Leonine quarter. Alexander, with the help of Godfrey of Lorraine and a military force of his new Norman allies, held another section of the city. The Church's fight for independence had reached a crisis.

Fortune, and from an unexpected quarter, favored the party of reform. The weak rule of Agnes and her favorites in Germany had proved favorable to discord and rivalry. In 1062 a conspiracy headed by the archbishops of Cologne and Mainz and the powerful Duke of Bavaria carried through a *coup d'état*. The young king Henry IV was kidnapped and the conspirators assumed control of the government. The change of the king's councilors and guardians meant a change of ecclesiastical policy. A council held at Augsburg (1062) recognized Alexander II as the legitimate pontiff, and Cadalus was abandoned to waste his own wealth in a losing struggle to maintain the coveted dignity. The schism was officially ended at the Council of Mantua (1064).

Alexander II could now proceed with the work of reform, and fortune continued to favor him. In 1065 Henry IV assumed the government in his own name and engaged in the long and exacting task of reducing Germany to order and obedience. Since the days

Alexander II
(1061-1073)

Cadalus of
Parma
(*Honorius II*)

A change of
rule in Ger-
many

of the Ottos the strength of the emperors had lain in the southern duchies; Saxony and Lorraine had shown a doubtful loyalty and the latter duchy had been in open rebellion against Henry III. For eight years Henry IV had little opportunity to give his attention to anything but his German problem. Saxony proved to be very difficult. It was still removed from the center of things and had been little affected by the great movements of the eleventh century. Feudalism had penetrated the district but had not absorbed social life there as it had elsewhere. Still predominantly agricultural, Saxony knew nothing of that spirit of municipio-economic independence which in France, in Lombardy, and along the Rhine and the Danube was encouraging the cities to put themselves under the immediate protection of the crown. The central government had been further hampered in controlling this district by the retarded development of the Church.

Henry IV made the initial error of attempting to reduce Saxony by the application of a visible domination. At strategic points castles were constructed which served both as instruments of civil order and constant, irritating reminders of Bavarian rule. To make matters worse the castles were garrisoned not by Saxons, but by Bavarians and Swabians; and these "foreigners" even filled the higher administrative offices to the disgust of the native Saxon. Resentment flared into rebellion in 1070, but it was ill timed and ill prepared and ended in defeat. Three years later Saxony was again in arms, this time supported even by the southern dukes who had been alienated by Henry's policy of appointing men of low degree to important positions. Henry IV had no resources beyond his own *ministeriales* and the wealth of the city of Worms, which had looked to him for protection against the rule of its archbishop. He made a virtue of necessity and regained the obedience of his rebellious subjects by promising to dismantle the objectionable castles and to dismiss the unpopular officials. The Saxons set to work to tear down the evidences of tyranny, and some enthusiasts went so far as to destroy the church at Harzburg and desecrate the tombs of Henry's son and brother. This excess alienated public opinion, and though the Saxons protested that the outrage was the work of irresponsible peasants, Henry seized the moral advantage which the occasion offered to reopen the attack upon Saxony. In June, 1075, the German king won a brilliant victory near Hohenburg on the Unstrut, and Saxony was reduced to obedience.

Saxony

Henry IV's shortsighted policy

The Saxon revolt of 1073

The battle of Hohenburg (1075)

The complexities of the German situation and the preoccupation of the German king had given the papacy a free hand, and Alexander II had taken full advantage of the opportunity. In 1066 he gained no little prestige for the papacy by bestowing his apostolic blessing upon the expedition which was to transform a duke of Normandy into a king of England. Three years later he refused to support Henry IV in his attempt to divorce his queen. In 1070 he summoned the Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz, the leading ecclesiastics of Germany, to Rome and rebuked the German king for his presumption in nominating bishops to the sees of Milan and Constance. In 1073 he took a more drastic step and excommunicated five of Henry's councilors for their active opposition to the Church's efforts at reform. Henry, involved in the Saxon revolt, sent a letter of humble apology to the Pope and promised to be better guided in the future.

Alexander II died in 1073 and was succeeded by one of the greatest of the medieval popes, Hildebrand, or Gregory VII. Hildebrand was probably born at Saono, in Tuscany, about the year 1020. His parents were extremely poor and he had been brought up at the monastery of Ste Mary-on-the-Aventine at Rome. In 1046 he had accompanied Pope Gregory VI when Henry III sent him in exile to Cologne. Lorraine had been very active in the reform movement, and it was probably at this time that Hildebrand formed the views which were to dominate his career. He returned to Rome with the reforming Pope Leo IX and there filled many posts in the organization of the Roman Church and became the intimate adviser of the Popes. His character is most difficult to summarize, for no Pope has been at once the object of such fulsome praise and unrestrained abuse. In stature he was small and without attractiveness. He was inclined to moodiness, devoid of all personal ambition, but filled with an invincible enthusiasm for the advancement of the Church. He had great breadth of vision and there "was something Napoleonic about his sense of destiny, his obstinacy of purpose, his strong will, and his partiality for military metaphors."

With Hildebrand the demands of the Church reached their full development. He revived the claims to temporal sovereignty as set forth in the "Donation of Constantine" and made full use of the "Forged Decretals," which gave the papacy an immediate control over all bishops and a deciding vote in determining the interpretation of canon law and in the settlement of doctrinal doubts. But the

*Pope versus
Emperor*

*Hildebrand
(1073-1084)*

Character

*The dilemma
of lay investi-
ture*

Pope could not exercise full control over the bishops if, as was the universal practice, they owed their election to lay influence. It might seem a simple matter to carry out the necessary reform, but to interfere with the existing system of ecclesiastical appointment was to dislocate political society. The employment of churchmen as crown officials was widespread, and in Germany more than anywhere else they had become an essential part of the State administration. Thus the elemental problem of lay investiture, which offered no difficulties in canon law, led to a wider and vastly more vital problem — the proper relation between the Church and the State. Was the Church to serve as the valuable but dependent administrative agency of the State or Empire, or was it to be an independent organization, fundamentally superior to the State since its purpose was fundamentally nobler? This was the real issue at stake for which lay investiture served as a convenient and obvious example.

Gregory VII had no illusions as to the magnitude and importance of the issue. He held fast to the ideal of a Catholic Church — one and indivisible — guided and controlled by the Bishop of Rome as the successor of the "Prince of the Apostles." He believed firmly in the omnipotence and infallibility of the Roman Church and in the right of its head to select and to depose emperors or to release the subjects of an unjust king from their obligation of obedience. These mighty claims, which he summarized in his *Dictatus Papæ*, were but the logical result of a chain of reasoning which assumed the absolute superiority of the soul over the body.

But there was more behind Gregory VII than the mere power of an idea. The Church too had great power and was less remote than the State. Where the civil government touched the individual once, the Church touched him a score of times. Through the sacrament of marriage it influenced him before he was born, and by its power of intercession it affected him after his death. It controlled his social life, provided much of his entertainment, dominated his spiritual experiences, and placed before him the means of intellectual activity. It was the Church which had toned down the harsh customs of men and which had raised the standard of morals. It was the Church and not the State which bore the burden of relieving the poor and caring for the sick.

On the other hand, the Hildebrandine ideal contained within itself its greatest weakness. The one and indivisible Church which was to control the "City of God" was an inherent paradox, for the

*The claims of
Hildebrand*

*Their weak-
ness*

“kingdom which was not of this world had to be realized in this world by the work of this world and its means.” One of the greatest reformers of the century, Peter Damiani, had realized this dilemma: that the Church must choose either the limited rôle of a small and purely spiritual body or a career of world dominance with its inevitable contamination. Cardinal Humbert had suggested the complete separation of Church and State, but the difficulty here was that the State was not purely secular nor was the Church purely spiritual.

Additional difficulties presented themselves in the fact that, while nothing which we call nationalism can be said to have existed in the Middle Ages, there were considerable local variations in ritual, and Church synods were normally under State control. German synods (e.g., Seligenstadt [1023] and Hoechst [1024]) had openly protested against the interference of Rome in matters of local importance.

The interests of Church and State came most obviously into collision over the appointment of bishops. The bishops exercised a *The bishops* control over vast stretches of territory, a fact which, quite apart from their official value, brought them within the interested observation of the State. This land they held upon feudal tenure which required an oath of fealty from all landholders. In their spiritual capacity the bishops were subject to the Pope, and as the welfare of the Church in general and the maintenance of clerical discipline in particular was in their hands, it was of the highest importance that men who combined religious zeal with administrative efficiency be appointed to ecclesiastical positions. For the king “to give up investitures would have been to change the whole system of government”; for the Pope to permit lay investiture would have jeopardized the hopes of reform and would have compromised a great ideal.

Gregory VII proceeded cautiously and for the first three years of his pontificate showed a most friendly attitude to Henry IV. He was occupied in trying to reform the French clergy and even threatened to put that country under an interdict. He was also busy with a visionary scheme of leading, along with the aging Agnes of Germany and the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, a Crusade against the infidel Saracens. During his proposed absence the care and protection of the Church was to be intrusted to Henry IV! The German king, who for his part was busy enough with his own problems, put himself out to win the favor of the Pope. He acknowledged his past

The lull before the storm

misdeeds and as an earnest of his good faith withdrew his candidate from the great see of Milan.

The decree against investiture (1075)

But in 1075 Gregory VII issued a decree forbidding the investiture of bishops by laymen. In itself it was no more than a reiteration of the recognized canonical rules for the selection of bishops and was probably intended as a guide to the Pataria, which was attempting to establish its own bishop in Milan in opposition to the royal nominee. The decree is famous not for its content but for the events which followed its announcement. News of its issuance came to Germany just after Henry IV had regained control of his kingdom as the result of his victory on the Unstrut. The friendship of the Pope was no longer of first importance, and many of the German clergy were hostile to the whole reform movement. The year before the synod of Erfurt had declared Gregory to be a "heretic or a madman." Henry felt strong enough to take up the challenge. He presented another candidate to the disputed see of Milan and made appointments to the bishoprics of Spoleto and Palermo, which were intimately connected with the Roman see. Gregory censured Henry for this change of front and threatened him with excommunication. The reply to this was the Synod of Worms (January, 1076) at which, with the assent of twenty-four German bishops, Gregory was declared deposed from his office. The Pope's answer was quickly given. At the Lenten Synod held at Rome Gregory excommunicated Henry and all the bishops who supported him, and followed it up with the dramatic and unprecedented step of releasing the king's subjects from their obedience: "I absolve all Christians from the oaths which they have sworn or may swear to him, and forbid all obedience to him as king." War had been declared!

Reaction in Germany

Henry had been too precipitate in attacking the papacy. He overestimated his strength, and when it was known that the king had been excommunicated and that disobedience was not to be an offense but a virtue, those who had any grievances against the crown—and they were many—began to join forces. The leaders of the opposition against the king had been waiting their opportunity, and nothing could suit their purpose better than to be able to assert the sanctity of their cause. In October (1076) the insurgent nobles assembled at Tribur, asserted the justice of war against a wicked king, and informed Henry that he was temporarily suspended from office and could not be reconsidered as their ruler unless he could remove the ban of excommunication before the coming February.

The Synod of Worms (1076)

The German nobles rebel

The Diet of Tribur (1076)

The Diet went even further and invited Gregory VII to attend and preside over a council to be held at Augsburg (February, 1077) when Henry's conduct should be carefully investigated and the question of the German kingship settled.

Nothing could have been more welcome to the Pope than an opportunity to conduct such a meeting, and in Germany. He accepted the invitation and prepared for the journey across the Alps which he hoped would result in the vindication of papal claims and in the visible triumph of the Church. But if the Diet of Tribur offered such brilliant prospects to the Pope, it also suggested — albeit unwittingly — an avenue of escape to Henry. The Diet had said that he must be received back into the Church by February, but February was also the time set for the Augsburg assembly and Henry had little reason to expect consideration from that quarter. The time was short and the need for action was great. Henry avoided the watchfulness of his enemies and, accompanied by his wife, made a perilous crossing of the Alps in the dead of winter. His appearance in Italy, in the unaccustomed character of a penitent, filled the German princes with consternation and the Pope with embarrassment. Gregory had progressed as far north as Tuscany and, uncertain of Henry's purpose, took refuge in the strong fortress of Canossa, the property of the Countess Matilda, an amazing woman who had dedicated her life to the advancement, as she was to leave her vast property to the endowment, of the Church.

It was a dramatic situation. Gregory was obliged to fight a battle with himself. Policy urged him to ignore the king and settle the matter at Augsburg; his duty as a priest demanded that he give ear to the penitent. Three days the struggle lasted before the priest triumphed over the politician. Henry, whom legend has represented as waiting barefoot in the snow until the door of the fortress should open and admit him once more to communion with men, was absolved from his excommunication, but on the condition that he was not to exercise royal power or use the royal insignia until the whole question of the German crown should be settled according to the papal decision.

The humiliation of the German king was a striking victory for the papacy and its claims of control over temporal rulers. But so far as Germany was concerned it was hardly less a triumph for Henry IV. The strongest argument of the rebels had been that they were warring against an excommunicated king. Henry was now no

Henry IV in trouble

Canossa

A political coup for Henry IV

longer excommunicate and many of his subjects returned to their allegiance. The king had not been restored to his kingship, but he had not been deposed. The rebel princes were, therefore, most uncomfortably placed upon the horns of a dilemma: should they go through with the Augsburg Diet and submit the fate of the German crown to the decision of the Pope or should they fall back upon undisguised rebellion? They chose the latter course, for now that Henry had been received back into the Church the question of the kingship was a purely political one and the presence of the Pope in Germany would have been as much a humiliation as, before Canossa, it had been an asset. So Gregory, with increasing disillusionment, waited for the invitation that never came.

The German magnates met at Forscheim (1077) and, in the presence of a papal legate, elected Duke Rudolf of Swabia as king of Germany. The Diet of Forscheim is of significance apart from this rebellious action. Rudolf was elected upon conditions: he not only agreed to allow freedom of election to bishoprics, but he confirmed the elective character of the German kingship by denying all claims of his son to succeed him. The action of this Diet aroused surprisingly little enthusiasm in Germany. Henry IV recrossed the Alps in April (1077), found considerable support throughout south Germany, especially among the peasantry, the lesser nobility, and the men of the great towns, and was soon able to restrict Rudolf to the "kingdom of Saxony," although the anti-king won a victory at Flarheim in 1080.

Gregory had tried to remain neutral in this Second Civil War in the hope of being called upon to act as arbiter. In 1080, however, he misjudged the importance of the battle of Flarheim, recognized Rudolf as king, and reissued his Bull of Excommunication against Henry. The circumstances attending its issue destroyed its efficacy. The German clergy, at the Synod of Brixen (June, 1080), deposed Gregory and elected the Archbishop of Ravenna as (anti-) Pope, i.e., Clement III. Later in the same year Rudolf was slain at the battle of the Elster. The rebels elected Count Herman of Salm, whose military inefficiency completed the ruin of a cause which had never been worth maintaining.

In 1081 Henry felt strong enough to take the offensive against the Pope. He was warmly received by the Lombard nobles. After a siege of three years he captured Rome and was crowned Emperor on Easter Sunday (1084) by his own antipope. Gregory had shut

*The Diet of
Forscheim
(1077)*

*Rudolf of
Swabia*

*The Synod of
Brixen (1080)*

*Henry IV
takes the
offensive
(1081)*

himself up in the Castle of St Angelo and had appealed to his Norman allies for help. Robert Guiscard forced the Emperor to withdraw (May, 1084) and, entering Rome, proceeded to sack it as it had never been sacked before. Imperial reinforcements from the north compelled Guiscard, in turn, to retreat. He withdrew to Salerno, taking Gregory VII with him. The great pontiff survived his humiliation only a few months and died May 25, 1085. In a bitter sentence he summed up his life: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile."

Since the days of the first Gregory, the papacy had not been held by so great a man as he who died at Salerno. There can be no doubt of the sincerity of his efforts to further what he considered to be the best interests of the Church. He did not limit his activities to Germany alone. He condemned Philip of France for his simony, reproved him for his harsh treatment of Italian merchants, and threatened him with excommunication. He claimed Spain and Hungary as the property of the papacy, and he demanded, although unsuccessfully, an oath of obedience from William the Conqueror. He was enough of a statesman to defer action until the right moment came and then to push his advantage to the utmost. If his methods at times revealed "the awful incongruity between the churchman and the Christian," yet the spiritual supremacy he tried to establish was a moral force superior to the feudal oligarchy which was the main influence in temporal affairs.

Inglorious as was the end of the great champion of the papacy, a more tragic fate was in store for his imperial rival. Nothing went right with Henry IV after his apparent victory in 1084. Pope Urban II (1088-1099) maintained an attitude of vigorous defense. He attempted to unite the enemies of Henry in Germany and Italy by effecting a marriage between Matilda of Tuscany and Welf, the son and heir of the Duke of Bavaria. In 1093 the Lombard malcontents, relying upon papal support, induced Henry's son, Conrad, to rebel against his father and to accept the Italian crown. Conrad's rebellion never assumed serious proportions, but the disloyalty of his son did much to break Henry's spirit. In 1095, at the Council of Piacenza, Urban II lent a sympathetic ear to the incredible charges of immorality preferred against Henry by his second wife, Praxedis. This same year saw the launching of the First Crusade against the Saracens, and the interest in the conflict between Pope and Emperor waned among a people already weary of war. For a

*The work of
Hildebrand*

*The last of
Henry IV*

*Family
disloyalty*

few years Henry was able to exercise a reasonable amount of control over Germany, and in 1103 he issued the famous "Peace of Mainz," which greatly restricted the rights of private war throughout the kingdom.

The shame of Prince Henry

In 1104 his second son, Henry, whom he had associated with him in the kingship since 1099, rebelled as Conrad had done before him. Henry had no better excuse for his treason than the promised support of the greater nobles who feared that a strong king would deprive them of the semi-independence gained in the thirty years of civil disorder. The rebel son, with unforgivable hypocrisy, pleaded the righteousness of disobedience since Gregory's second Bull of Excommunication had been reissued by his successors, Urban II and Paschal II (1099-1118). History tells no story of conduct more unfilial than that of young Henry toward his broken father. With consummate deceit and a generous employment of prayers, promises, tears, supplications, and humble prostrations, the son trapped the father into captivity under the guise of offering him protection. Henry IV, crushed by the desertion of his wife and the base treachery of his two sons, abdicated the throne in 1105. A year later some of the old spirit flickered again in the disillusioned king. He escaped from his confinement and found willing supporters among the men of the Rhine towns. But death overtook him at Liège on August 7, 1106.

Henry IV's character

Henry IV is one of the most tragic figures in German history. The troubles which clouded his whole reign were none of his making. His long minority, which was characterized by the weak acquiescence of Agnes and by the selfishness of the nobles, had created a situation innately hostile to the establishment of a strong central government. The policy of Otto I of building a system of government which rested heavily upon ecclesiastical support, and the success of Henry III in reestablishing the dignity of the papacy, were fundamentally responsible for the disasters of the reign. According to the stories of Praxedis, Henry was not a good man and, judged by results, not a great king. Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary were left to pursue their courses without German interference; Lombardy slipped out of control; the duchies regained so much of their earlier independence that provincialism more than held its own against national unity for the rest of the Middle Ages; Gregory VII was defeated, it is true, but the papacy remained unshaken and its prestige was considerably increased by its predominant part in the

crusading movement, from which the Emperor had been excluded by the rebellion of his sons. Henry IV was superstitious, consulted oracles, and was even suspected of a secret devotion to the old gods; but there must have been something good in a king whose strongest supporters were the rising democrats of the towns and the sturdy responsive farmers of the countryside.

The death of Henry IV left the investiture struggle no nearer a settlement, and nearly twenty years elapsed before an agreement was reached. Henry V was favored by the war weariness which pervaded his kingdom, and by a lack of agreed principles among the nobles, each anxious to make secure what he had gained from an embarrassed government. Henry achieved a measure of success in maintaining order in Germany, but his rule was harsh and devoid of any quality which could win him the affection of any class of his subjects. In 1110 he invaded Italy, reduced the Lombard cities opposed to imperial rule, and forced the proud Countess of Tuscany to recognize his supremacy. He pushed on to Rome and by force compelled Paschal II to grant him the imperial crown (April 13, 1111). With the Pope in his power he tried to end the investiture struggle to the advantage of the State. A logical solution was reached when Henry V agreed to renounce all his rights to investiture and to permit freedom of election, while the Pope, for his part, promised to surrender all temporal property in Germany possessed by the Church. But this solution had the sole merit of being logical; it raised a whirlwind of opposition from the higher clergy, who would thus be deprived of wealth and political influence. Paschal II realized the impossibility of carrying out his part of the contract and in a weak moment agreed to abandon the rights of investiture to the Emperor. Henry V returned to Germany, "having extorted in one successful campaign that which no power had been able to wring from the more stubborn Hildebrand and Urban."

The second solution was no more acceptable to the reform party than the first had been to the worldly churchmen. Unlucky Paschal II repudiated his action within a year and revived the claims of Gregory VII. For the next three years Henry V was busy with German affairs and met with a severe reverse at Welfesholze in an attempt to reduce Saxony to a humble obedience. In Italy a new difficulty appeared for the Empire. Countess Matilda, the lifelong supporter of reform, died in 1115 and left her vast territories in Tuscany and Lombardy to the Church, an alienation of property

*Henry V
(1106-1125)*

The investiture struggle drags on

The Matilda inheritance

which her feudal suzerain, the Emperor, could not regard with indifference. Henry V was able to leave Germany in 1117. He seized the possessions of Matilda and, pushing on to Rome, blocked Paschal II in the Castle of St Angelo, where that luckless Pope died in 1118.

The weary struggle dragged itself out for another four years. At the Council of Worms (1122) an agreement was at length attained in a concordat by which: (a) Henry V granted to the Pope or his representative the right to invest bishops with the "ring and staff" as symbols of his spiritual functions and permitted the free election of the bishops by the clergy; (b) Pope Calixtus II (1119-1124) agreed that all elections should take place in the presence of the Emperor or of his envoys, who might invest the successful candidate with the temporalities of his see.

The concordat was frankly a compromise. Henry V surrendered the shadow to retain the substance. The papacy had gained a point in principle but had modified its claims of absolute supremacy over its churchmen and the State.

The investiture struggle, or at least that part of it which was limited to investiture, was over. It left neither Church nor State unscathed. The Church had committed itself to a policy and a program of which investiture was only a part, and its unwillingness or inability to withdraw from its position involved it in a conflict with the Empire which lasted into the following century. The results upon the Empire were more immediate and obvious. In Germany the nobles had taken advantage of the king's difficulties, not only to increase their own independence but also to bring powerful and sometimes effective pressure to bear upon the royal policy. Further, they had asserted the elective nature of the German kingship, which if not revolutionary in theory was so in fact. The Rhine towns inaugurated a policy of extricating themselves from the domination of local lords by placing themselves under royal protection. Both Henry IV and Henry V increased the number of their *ministeriales* to balance the growing number of feudal deserters or "undesirables." These *ministeriales*, largely drawn from the middle class or the lower ranks of the nobles, were absorbed in the service of the imperial executive and so weakened the older monopoly of the churchmen in the affairs of State. In Italy the rich Lombard cities, restless under foreign domination, formed civic leagues to combat

imperial aggression. Indeed, the fate of Germany for the rest of the Middle Ages was in no slight degree determined by the attempts of the emperors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to regain control of the Italian peninsula. The larger issues involved in the question of Church reform had yet to be settled.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EMPIRE IN DECAY

*The election
of Lothar of
Supplinburg
(1125-1138)*

THE death of Henry V without heirs favored the nobles in establishing the predominance of the principle of election over hereditary succession. Henry had desired that the crown should pass to one of his nephews, either to Frederick, Duke of Swabia, or to his brother, Conrad of Franconia. These brothers were the sons of Frederick of Hohenstaufen, who had stood by Henry IV and to whom that luckless king had given the duchy of Swabia and the hand of his daughter in marriage. The nobles of Germany, however, if not in sympathy with the claims of family, were at least impressed by the facts that Frederick of Swabia was wealthy and spirited, that his brother was Duke of Franconia and that his marriage to the daughter of the Duke of Bavaria gave him extensive influence over South Germany. They turned, therefore, to a candidate less formidable in appearance.

Lothar of Supplinburg, Duke of Saxony, was a man whose rise to prominence had been meteoric. Nothing is known of his family save that his father had been killed in the Saxon revolt. Lothar had won favor with the family of Nordheim, had married the granddaughter of the prominent rebel Otto, and upon the death of Otto's son, Henry, had succeeded to the vast estates of the Nordheim family. He exercised a very effective control over the Saxon East Mark, and the Mark of Meissen. Lothar was popular with the Saxons because of his energetic support of Saxon liberty. He was in friendly relations with the Church, shared the Saxon dislike for Franconia, was getting on in years, and gave every promise of dying without a son. This combination of virtues procured his election at Mainz in August, 1125.

For ten years Lothar's reign was disturbed by the persistent refusal of the Hohenstaufens to recognize his right to the throne. But in 1135, after a decade of raids and counterraids, sieges and countersieges, plunderings and burnings, both Frederick and Conrad (who had assumed the Italian crown in 1127) made their submission and retained their duchies. In the course of this civil war

*A decade of
uncertainty*

Lothar negotiated a marriage which had fatal consequences for Germany. To counteract the influence which Frederick of Swabia exercised in Bavaria, Lothar gave his daughter to Henry the Proud, Duke of Bavaria, who, in addition to his great holdings in his own duchy, had claims to considerable territory in Italy.

Lothar was at pains to avoid any conflict with the Church. He did not insist upon the exercise of the imperial rights as recognized by the concordat. In 1130 the death of Honorius II gave rise to a struggle among the Roman factions for the possession of the papacy. Two Popes, Anacletus II (of Jewish descent) and Innocent II, were chosen by their respective parties and appealed to Europe for recognition. The wealth of Anacletus II and his political alliance with the Normans gave him a temporary command of Rome, so that Innocent was driven to find refuge and support in France. Here his cause was taken up by the king and the great monastic reformer, St Bernard. The eloquence or reputation of Bernard won Lothar over to the side of Innocent II. In 1133 Lothar entered Italy and received the imperial crown. In the preliminary negotiations the details of the Concordat of Worms were reconfirmed and the imperial fiefs of the Countess Matilda were allocated to the Duke of Bavaria after Lothar's death, but as fiefs held from the Pope.

Three years later Lothar was again in Italy, for Anacletus was still being maintained by the vigor of the Normans. A whirlwind campaign into the south swept the Normans into Calabria, but a quarrel with the Pope as to the suzerainty of reconquered Apulia led to the Emperor's withdrawal. The Normans, under Roger II of Sicily, took up the offensive, regained their lost territory and captured Innocent II, who had set out against them. By the Treaty of Mignano (1139) Innocent recognized Roger II as king of Sicily, Capua and Apulia, while the Norman leader agreed to hold his kingdom as a fief from the Pope.

Lothar had died (1138) in an obscure peasant's hut on his retreat from Italy. His reign had been without splendor but not without honor. He had restored order in Germany and, at the Diet of Bamberg (1135), had proclaimed a general peace throughout his kingdom. One contemporary at least recognized him as the "Father of the Fatherland," while another gave him perhaps the finest tribute a king could have: "In his days the people were without fear; for in peace and liberty each one possessed his own."

*The schism
of 1130*

*The Treaty of
Mignano
(1139)*

Lothar left no son to contest the crown, and the nobles were free

*The first
struggle of
Welf and
Hohenstaufen*

*The election
of Conrad of
Hohenstaufen
(1138-1152)*

*The Treaty of
Frankfort
(1142)*

*The Second
Crusade*

to exert their right of election. But if there was no son there was a powerful and ambitious son-in-law in Henry the Proud of the House of Welf. Henry was not only the Duke of Bavaria and the possessor of wide lands in his duchy but, by marriage or inheritance, he had acquired large properties in Saxony and the estates of the Countess Matilda in Tuscany and Lombardy. His wealth and his personal arrogance were liabilities, and the nobles turned to Conrad of Hohenstaufen, who was elected by the influence of the Archbishop of Trèves and those magnates who feared the combination of Bavarian wealth and Saxon pugnacity. Henry offered to recognize Conrad as king if Conrad would allow him to retain the duchies of Bavaria and Saxony. Conrad not only refused to sanction this powerful combination but took the ill-advised step of depriving Henry of both duchies. So Germany entered upon a period of civil war in which principle became synonymous with family and party degenerated into faction.

In 1139 Henry died with suspicious suddenness, and in the next year Conrad won a victory over his enemies at Weinsberg in Saxony. He made little further progress, however, and compromised with his opponents in the Treaty of Frankfort (1142). By this agreement the Saxons recognized Conrad as king of Germany. In return, Conrad bestowed Saxony upon the minor son of Henry the Proud. Bavaria was given to Conrad's half-brother, Henry Jasomirgott. This treaty, like so many others, failed to satisfy anyone and provided a ready excuse for those who wished to oppose the king. Germany remained in a state of sullen anarchy which Conrad was unable to check. In 1146 famine and pestilence added to the general uneasiness.

Fortunately a diversion was provided in this year. St Bernard preached the Second Crusade in France, and his lieutenants did the same in Germany. The Germans, involved in civil war and the investiture struggle, had taken little part in the first great expedition against the infidels. They welcomed the Second Crusade with enthusiasm and massacred the Jews in the first outburst of misguided energy. Conrad himself took the Cross along with many of his nobles. The expedition which set out with reasonable prospects of success suffered a double humiliation before the walls of Damascus, where they were not only bribed to retreat but in their zeal took gilded copper for gold! Conrad returned to Germany in 1149 to find young Henry of Saxony anxious to have the Treaty of Frankfort

annulled and his claims to Bavaria reconsidered. Conrad tried procrastination and force alternately and with equal lack of success. He died in 1152, the first German king since Otto I who had not been able to enter Italy and receive the imperial crown.

It is difficult to account for the unbroken record of failure which characterized this reign. Conrad was neither inefficient, lazy, nor cowardly. Indeed, to Godfrey of Viterbo he seemed a very garner of virtues, for he was a "Seneca in council, a Paris in appearance, a Hector in battle." Two things, however, seem clear: he was unwilling to permit the union of Saxony and Bavaria under a single duke, and he was unable to reduce the Welf family to such impotence that their claims might be disregarded.

While the unfortunate Conrad was following the Cross to disaster under the walls of Damascus, the Saxon princes combined the crusading fervor with something of native practicality and chose to war against the infidels nearer home, upon the eastern frontier. They were given the general privileges and special insignia of Crusaders. Private jealousy and mutual distrust between the Saxon leaders and the Danes who joined them robbed the expedition of much of its value, but Pomerania formally accepted Christianity, and Brandenburg, the germ of the future Prussia, became a German possession. From now on, the policy of eastward expansion, begun by Otto I and almost wholly neglected since his day, was revived and pursued with vigor and varying fortune.

The Empire had passed through a century of disaster since the days of Henry III. The old characteristics remained: the five stem duchies were still intact; the system of imperial administration was still largely in the hands of ecclesiastics, although the *ministeriales* were assuming an ever more important place in the councils and business of the State; and the towns were acquiring the status of a "third order" in the feudal society. The century 1150-1250 was to bring about many changes. The great Emperors Frederick I and Frederick II made Italy the beginning and the end of their politics. In consequence, Germany was neglected and the forces which were undermining the old Germany of the Ottos had free play to create the mosaic of principalities and petty states which went by the name of Germany from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

Conrad's crown passed without opposition, but nevertheless by election, to his nephew, Frederick of Hohenstaufen, far better known to history as Frederick Barbarossa. One of the greatest of medieval

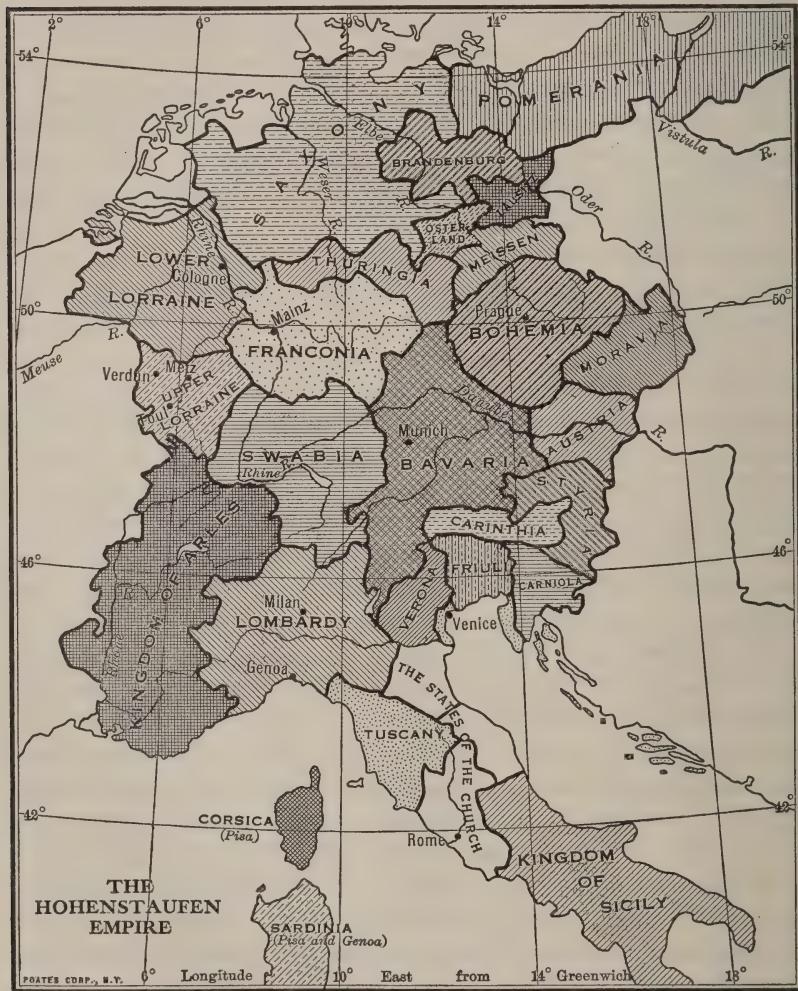
*The failure of
the reign*

*The "Cru-
sade" against
the Slavs*

Brandenburg

*Frederick
Barbarossa
1152-1190*

kings, he is one of the most difficult to understand. Teutonic in appearance and in those qualities which have made him a familiar figure in legend and poetry, he neglected his own country to pursue the *ignis fatuus* of Empire. Italy was the scene of his greatest



activity; Italy saw him at the height of his success, but Italy also saw him in humiliation and defeat. His Italian policy went far to keep Germany apart from the events of Western Europe, and gave France the opportunity to emerge as the greatest power of the West. Frederick did not ignore Germany and its problems, but he very

obviously dealt with Germany in the broader light of Italian policy. Were he planning a campaign into the south, he was conciliatory; were Italy submissive, he showed himself jealous of royal rights. The German problem, stripped of its multiple aspects, centered in the rivalry between the families of Welf and Hohenstaufen. Frederick, to be sure, was a Hohenstaufen, and as such he relied upon the family wealth in Swabia and Franconia and the *ministeriales* attached to his House. But he was also connected with the Welfs, for his mother, Judith, was the sister of Henry the Proud, former Duke of Bavaria. A reconciliation between the two families might have been possible had it not been for the vast and undeniably legitimate claims of the young Henry "the Lion," son of Henry the Proud. This difficulty had cast its shadow over the reign of Conrad and continued to cloud those of his successors.

During the first years of his reign Frederick, who needed a peaceful Germany as a preliminary to a defeated Italy, showed himself most amenable. He confirmed Henry the Lion in his position as Duke of Saxony and in 1154 went so far as to admit him to the duchy of Bavaria as well. Two things prevented this from being a definite settlement: Bavaria was claimed by Henry Jasomirgott, and Henry the Lion was fully occupied in Saxony countering the opposition of Albert the Bear, to whom Conrad had once given the duchy, but who had been relegated to a portion known as the North Mark after the Treaty of Frankfort. Henry Jasomirgott was finally compensated with the new duchy of Austria, to which was added a considerable section of eastern Bavaria. Albert the Bear died in 1170, and Henry the Lion was in uncontested control of Saxony. Just as Italy had made Frederick treat Henry with tact, so Albert had prevented Henry from an open breach with his king.

From 1170 the situation changes; Henry refused to accompany Frederick on the Italian campaign of 1174, and this refusal resulted in the defeat and humiliation of the German king. In 1177 Frederick signed a truce with his Italian enemies and took advantage of the respite to settle the German problem. Frederick may have attributed the failure of the Italian expedition to the absence of support from Henry the Lion; he may have suspected that Henry was implicated in a plot with his father-in-law, Henry II of England, to bring Germany within the control of the Angevin Empire. Whatever the cause, Frederick summoned Henry the Lion to appear before the imperial court to answer charges of alleged disobedience. Henry

German politics conditioned by Italy

Frederick and Henry "the Lion"

The creation of the duchy of Austria

The Diet of Erfurt (1181)

Westphalia

The effect of the division of 1181

Frederick's German policy

Justice

Legislation

Economics

ignored the summons and at the Diet of Erfurt (1181) was deprived of his duchies of Saxony and Bavaria. The duchy of Saxony was broken up into two portions: the eastern part, which retained the old name, was given to the son of Albert the Bear; the western part was formed into the new duchy of Westphalia and was given to the Archbishop of Cologne. Otto of Wittelsbach received the duchy of Bavaria, which was reduced in size by the creation of a duchy of Meran, formed of Styria and the Tyrol.

The immediate effect of this partition of the duchies was to weaken the power of the Welfs; the ultimate result was to weaken the central authority by the elevation to positions of prominence of new families in whom the sense of gratitude weakened with each successive generation. For the rest, Frederick's policy in Germany was characterized by a statesmanship which makes it regrettable that he had not concentrated his efforts in his own kingdom. He was able to keep the great nobles in check by a studied policy of favoring the nobility of lesser rank and of furthering the development of the towns. He was particularly generous in his grants of privileges and charters to the towns, which were thereby brought into closer contact with the royal authority and were of great value to the king, providing him with an army independent of feudal restrictions and with money that increased his independence of feudal levies and subsidies. Above all, Frederick relied upon his *ministeriales* both for military service and for the administration of the State. He may have been exaggerating when he said to a loyal *ministerial*: "I would give two Queens for another such as you," but the remark is significant of the growing importance of this Order.

The Church too, for the most part, remained loyal to him in his conflict with Henry the Lion and the papacy. He was the first king of Germany, with the possible exception of Henry III, who made it his business to deal directly with his subjects. He made many progresses throughout the kingdom, enforcing the peace, settling disputes, and administering a high standard of personal justice. His legislation "had an imperial character and an imperial application which had not been seen in Europe since the days of Charlemagne." He summoned frequent national assemblies or diets with which he consulted on matters of general importance. As a result of his strong and intelligent rule Germany enjoyed the rare experience of internal peace. The favor shown to the towns and the comparative protection assured to life and property gave great stimulus to trade

and commerce, which were helped by increasing contact with the East. Not only were goods produced in more abundance and transported and sold with more profit in wider markets, but the best of the German spirit found expression in the *Nibelungenlied* and the poems of the Minnesingers.

But it was Italy which conditioned Frederick's activities and absorbed his energies for thirty years. Frederick was not only ambitious; he possessed a very legal mind and his difficulties arose out of disagreements as to the exact extent of his rights. His first expedition in 1154-1155 revealed the obstacles which stood in the way of a revival of such an Empire as that of Charlemagne or even that of the Saxon house. Frederick had scarce crossed the Alps when he encountered a spirit of resistance. The Lombard cities had profited by the investiture struggle to acquire a high degree of municipal independence. Most of them were self-governing under elected consuls, who were advised or controlled by a small council, or *credenza*. They admitted the formal claims of imperial suzerainty but were ready to oppose any attempt on the part of the Emperor to interfere in the internal administration of the cities.

This "town movement" was not anti-German and had no connection with patriotism. It was a determination on the part of individual cities to maintain their newly won independence against *whatever* power threatened to impair it, be that power a neighboring city, the feudal nobility of the district, or the Emperor. Some cities, such as Pavia, believed their interests best served by currying imperial favor. Frederick was quick to realize that these jealous towns must be subjugated before Italy could be anything more than a nominal part of the Empire. But, just now, he had neither the time nor the means to undertake this task. He gave an earnest of his intentions, however, by the complete destruction of the little town of Tortona, an ally of Milan, because it had dared to resist him.

Frederick had little real difficulty in procuring the imperial crown. Pope Hadrian IV (the only Englishman to receive pontifical honors) was beset by enemies and only too willing to receive German aid upon *any* conditions. Rome was seething with discontent and was struggling to establish communal liberty against pontifical supremacy. The leader of this movement was Arnold of Brescia, a sincere zealot who saw in the possession of property and in temporal rule the greatest dangers to the Church, and whose imagination had been fired by the signs and monuments of republican Rome.

*Frederick
in Italy*

*The Lombard
cities*

*Frederick and
Hadrian IV*

*Arnold of
Brescia*

Hadrian had made some headway against the revolt by placing the city under an interdict until such time as Arnold should leave it. But Arnold was still in Italy and his words were in the hearts of his followers. In the south of Italy, Hadrian was at odds with William the Bad, successor of Roger II, King of Sicily. William had ravaged the papal lands about Benevento and had even expelled from Monte Cassino such monks as he suspected of being in sympathy with the Pope. Against these troubles Frederick was a very present help.

Frederick had refused to hold the Pope's stirrup for him to dismount when Hadrian and the Emperor met at Nepi, and only his desire for a speedy coronation impelled him at length to perform a service hallowed by three centuries of observance. Frederick agreed to hand Arnold of Brescia over to the Church and to assist the Pope against the Normans. Arnold was secretly tried and as secretly executed, and his ashes were thrown into the Tiber lest the Romans keep and cherish them as relics. The coronation took place at the tomb of the apostles, but without the knowledge of the Romans. A bloody encounter between the Germans and the citizens offended at the secrecy closed an eventful day. Frederick's army was weakened by the fever that has ruined so many northern invaders. Realizing that Rome would be too strong for him to conquer, this time, he led his depleted host back to Germany.

Three years later (1158) Frederick entered Italy again but in no spirit of conciliation. He was determined to curb the rebellious Lombard cities, and there were also two matters to be cleared up with the Pope. In the first place, Hadrian had come to terms with King William of Sicily and had recognized the Norman claims to lands in southern Italy which Frederick regarded as imperial territory. In the second place, Hadrian, wittingly or no, had reopened the old issue of the relative position of Church and State at an imperial diet held at Besançon (1157) to celebrate the marriage between the Emperor and Beatrice of Burgundy.

Hadrian had sent a letter to the Emperor in which, after reproving Frederick for his lukewarm support of the papacy, he stated that, having already "conferred" the crown upon him, he would be glad to bestow even greater "benefits." This sentence veiled a powerful suggestion beneath an innocent exterior. The expression "to confer a benefit" strongly implied to the mind of the feudal noble the grant of a fief by a lord to his vassal. This was the reading of the Diet of Besançon, and the papal envoy seemed to confirm it by replying

*The corona-
tion of
Frederick
(1155)*

*The second
Italian journey*

*The trouble
over "bene-
fits"*

*The Diet of
Besançon
(1157)*

to the outraged assembly: "From whom then does the Emperor hold his Empire if not from the Pope?" Hadrian hastened to correct this impression, but suspicion had been aroused and Frederick was anxious to put this matter beyond the bounds of ambiguity.

He discovered that the hostility of the Lombard cities still persisted and centered in Milan. To set an example and to show his sincerity, Frederick laid siege to the great Lombard metropolis and reduced it to submission. From Milan he moved to Roncaglia (1158), where he assembled a diet and set forth in clear terms his conception of the imperial rights in Italy. To the Emperor belonged "all feudal rights, the mints, the customs, the mills and all other rights including that of appointing the city consuls, the podesta and other civic magistrates."¹ These claims were far-reaching and disturbed even those cities which had looked for imperial favor. Crema refused to dismantle her walls at the Emperor's command and for six months withstood a siege with a heroism scarce equaled in the history of war.

Hadrian was excusably worried by the Emperor's claims at Roncaglia and by his display of strength in Lombardy, so he approached Milan, Brescia, and Piacenza with plans for a defensive league of the Lombard cities against further imperial aggression. But he died in September, 1159, before much could be accomplished.

The death of Hadrian IV produced a split in the College of Cardinals, one party favoring the continuation of Hadrian's policy of maintaining the independence of the Church, the other more inclined to come to terms with the Emperor. The result was a turbulent election from which two Popes emerged, Victor IV, the choice of those friendly to Frederick, and Alexander III, who represented the anti-imperial group. Neither pontiff was able to occupy Rome, and both appealed to Europe for recognition. Frederick invited both candidates to present their claims before a synod which he called at Pavia (1160). Victor IV complied, but Alexander refused to recognize the validity of such a body and stayed away. Victor was duly recognized as Pope by this imperial gathering, and the decision was confirmed by Frederick. Alexander at once excommunicated both his rival and the Emperor and released Frederick's subjects from obedience.

This papal problem had arisen while the Emperor was engaged in subduing his Lombard subjects. Milan had taken advantage of

*The Diet of
Roncaglia
(1158)*

*The idea of a
Lombard
League*

*The schism
of 1159*

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, V, p. 427.

The destruction of Milan (1162)

Frederick's difficulties before Crema to break into open revolt, and the Emperor decided to end Lombard resistance once and for all by making a terrible example of this obstinate and dangerous rebel. Milan equaled the courage and sacrifice of Crema and surrendered only when every resource had failed and when famine had sapped the strength of the defenders (March, 1162). The gallant city deserved the consideration that is paid to the brave, but Frederick had chosen Milan to be a terror for the present and a warning for the future. The citizens were expelled and the second city of Italy was given over to pillage and to fire. Brescia and Piacenza, which had joined Milan in Hadrian's plan for a "Lombard League," were compelled to raze their walls and to accept imperial officials. When Frederick returned to Germany Lombardy appeared crushed and the "imperial claims asserted at Roncaglia held the field."²

But Lombardy was not crushed, only stunned. The officials and magistrates appointed by the Emperor or his agents to govern or supervise the Lombard towns carried out their duties with more zeal than tact, and by their unsympathetic administration kept alive the feeling of resentment and the lust for revenge. Frederick appeared in Italy in 1163 but gained no successes. Indeed, he weakened his position by turning a deaf ear to the complaints presented by the harassed cities against the severity of the imperial rulers.

The creation of the Lombard League

In 1164 Victor IV died, and Frederick foolishly consented to the creation of Paschal III as a rival to Alexander III. This election was without any canonical justification, and it aroused bitter opposition among the German clergy. Resistance to the Emperor in Germany was followed by resistance to the Emperor in Lombardy, where Alexander was busily engaged in forming a new Lombard League under the leadership of Verona. Furthermore, Alexander was on intimate terms with the King of Sicily. The triple alliance of the Lombards, the papacy, and the Normans threatened the extinction of the imperial power in Italy, and Frederick moved south once again to reduce the peninsula to obedience.

The fourth invasion is defeated by the plague

Lombardy was sullenly hostile, and when the Emperor laid siege to Rome, the "League of Verona" began to rebuild Milan and strengthen the defenses of every town which might resist the Emperor. Alexander fled from Rome to Benevento and Rome surrendered in August, 1167. At the moment of triumph, disaster swift and terrible fell upon the invading army. A plague of unusual

² *Camb. Med. Hist.*, V, p. 435.

virulence swept away the troops by hundreds and did not spare the leaders. There was nothing to do but retreat, and Frederick made his way back to Germany, every step of the road imperiled by the menacing Lombards. "The powerful monarch who had descended on Italy certain of victory, returned to his own country, alone, disarmed, a fugitive."³

For six years Frederick remained in Germany and devoted his energies to the maintenance of order. But he had not forgotten Italy, nor had he any intention of abandoning his purpose of bringing the peninsula under imperial control. Experience had taught him the difficulties of the task. For their part, the Italians had been busy. The respite from war had given them opportunities for strengthening their defense which they were not slow to accept. A Lombard League was not only created but, under the auspices and definite encouragement of Alexander III, showed a coöperative energy which was as remarkable as it was rare. City walls were heightened or repaired, supplies of food and war material were collected, and negotiations with the Normans were carried on through the agency of the Pope. Most important of all, the Lombard League built a town at the confluence of the rivers Bormida and Tanaro, which commanded the plains of Lombardy and which, in honor of the vigorous churchman who was the outstanding champion of anti-imperialism, was named Alessandria.

In 1174 Frederick, realizing that delay was more favorable to Italian resistance than to German prospects of success, made his fifth expedition across the Alps. His army was disciplined and efficient, but small. Henry the Lion, since 1170 the second man in Germany, had refused to heed either the orders or pleas of his king and had stayed at home. Early successes were neutralized by the unexpected powers of resistance of Alessandria, which defied every effort and strategy of the Germans. Another year was spent in campaigns without apparent objective and certainly without any notable success. Frederick made a last appeal to Henry the Lion, but in vain. In 1176 the imperial army met the forces of the League at Legnano. A day of bitter conflict ended in the rout of Frederick's soldiery and the extinction of his hopes of reducing Italy by force. Frederick at once began negotiations which would lead to peace with his enemies. At Anagni (1177) and later at Venice the Emperor abandoned his antipope and recognized Alexander III as the legiti-

*Six years of
respite*

*The establish-
ment of
Alessandria*

*The fifth
expedition
to Italy*

*The battle of
Legnano
(1176)*

*The peace of
Anagni
(1177)*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

mate head of the Church; he promised to restore those lands to the Church which he had claimed as the property of the Empire; he agreed to suspend hostilities against the Lombards for six years and against the Normans for fifteen. Alexander survived his triumph only four years and died in 1181.

In 1183 Frederick came to terms with the Lombard League at Constance. "It was an honourable agreement. The high sovereignty of the Empire was admitted without question . . . but in such a way as not to interfere with the freedom of the republics or with their development. . . . The cities were allowed to elect their own consuls or podestas, who were to administer justice according to their laws. They could also raise taxes without the Emperor's special consent, although an appeal to him was conceded. All the ancient customs were recognized. The allies were to fortify their towns and castles and the League was to continue unimpaired with power of renewal. . . . Thus the imperial claims put forth at Roncaglia were curtailed at Constance, and the proud but sagacious prince became reconciled to the noble people who had defended their liberty with such valor and tenacity."⁴

In October of 1187 Jerusalem, which had been regained by the first Crusaders, was captured by Saladin. The following spring Frederick took the Cross at Mainz, and a year later set out for the East, leaving the Empire in the charge of his son Henry, whom he had persuaded the German magnates to elect as king. From this expedition Frederick never returned; he was drowned in the river Chalycadnus June 10, 1190.

Frederick Barbarossa was a warrior, a patriot, and a statesman. His ambition was great, but it was characterized by a worthy ideal and justified by the concepts of law. To restore the Empire to its fullest legal limits and to assure the Emperor his fullest legal power was the underlying motive of his manifold activities. To accomplish this he was ready to use the sword, but he could compromise when a situation demanded diplomacy rather than force. He was no enemy of the Church, and twice he made the journey to the East in the service of Christ, but he was prepared to resist such claims of the Church as he regarded to be without legal foundation. His struggle with Alexander and the Lombard League was a conflict over the interpretation of legal claims. Frederick was a lawgiver as well as a law supporter, and the amount of his known legislation exceeds

*The Treaty of
Constance
(1183)*

*The Third
Crusade*

Summary

⁴ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, V, p. 452.

that of *all* of his predecessors by more than fifty per cent. He issued proclamations of peace applicable throughout the Empire and enforceable by heavy fines; he fixed the price of corn to prevent forestalling and price inflations; he reformed the criminal procedure and permitted private war only under specified conditions. That Frederick was popular is evidenced by the respect with which he was treated by contemporary chroniclers and by the frequency with which he appeared in verse and legend. His ability in war, his splendid figure, his geniality (for "he always looked as though he wanted to laugh"), his dislike of shams (he frequently lost his temper when his wife wore a dyed wig), and his impartiality were qualities which won him the reverence of the men of the twelfth century and which the Meistersingers and Minnesingers were quick to recognize as models for their poems of chivalry.

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE HOHENSTAUFENS

*Henry VI
(1190-1197)*

WHEN Frederick left Germany to rescue the Savior's tomb from the infidels, he intrusted the government to his son Henry, then twenty-four years of age. Henry was very unlike his father. He was cruel and vindictive without the excuse of justice; he was unscrupulous in his methods and without honor in his dealings. He was possessed of an active intelligence which was strengthened by a considerable degree of learning and which showed itself in an ability to adjust the theoretic importance of the Empire to limits of practical attainment. His schemes were far-reaching, but he took care not to strain the resources of his Empire in the pursuit of objectives beyond the borders of reason.

*Constance
of Sicily*

In 1184 Frederick had concluded an agreement with King William II of Sicily which went far to neutralize the effects of the Treaty of Constance. According to this agreement Frederick's son and successor, Henry, was to marry Constance of Sicily. This marriage contract was purely political, for Constance was the aunt of the Sicilian king. But William II was childless, and if he were to die without offspring (as, indeed, he did five years later) Constance would inherit the lands for which the Lombards, Charlemagne, and nearly every Emperor since Otto I had striven in vain. The marriage was celebrated in Milan in the following year, and the place of the ceremony is only second in significance to the ceremony itself. Milan had been the center of anti-imperialism in the north of Italy as Sicily had been its champion in the south, and both had been allies of the papacy. But Milan had been won over to Frederick by his generous, if politic, grants of privileges by which it received full rights of jurisdiction and taxation. Within its own territory it had now become a quasi-sovereign State and an ally of the Empire. The marriage of Henry and Constance not only strengthened the Empire but weakened the papacy, by depriving it of its strongest supports and leaving it open to attack on every side.

For the first years of his reign Henry occupied himself with the affairs of Germany, which were disturbed by the presence of Henry

the Lion. That formidable exile had returned after Frederick and his Crusaders had gone and was now scheming to restore his lost fortune. Henry VI worked diligently to restore things to order, but his thoughts constantly turned to the south and to the inheritance of his wife. In Sicily the death of William II (1189) precipitated a political crisis; the agreement of 1184 was disregarded and the Sicilian nobles offered the crown to Tancred of Lecce, a man whose ugliness of feature was only surpassed by the nobility of his character. This election was the signal for the revolt of the discontented, consisting chiefly of the subject Saracens and such nobles as sympathized with the claims of Constance. The revolt was not serious, however, and Tancred further strengthened himself by making a fortunate alliance with Richard I of England, who had stopped in Sicily on his way to Palestine to join the Third Crusade.

Tancred of Lecce

Henry VI could not afford to ignore these developments in Sicily if he intended to make his wife's inheritance an integral part of the Empire, for Tancred's power increased with each passing month. If he were going to act at all he must act quickly. He decided to act, and coming to terms with the German malcontents he crossed the Alps in 1191. At Rome he received the imperial crown from the weak Pope Celestine III, who sacrificed the principles of Gregory VII and Alexander III for the sake of private vengeance; for Celestine bestowed the crown in return for the destruction of Tusculum, a city long a source of annoyance to both popes and Romans. Thus "the ruin of Tusculum served Henry as the death of Arnold of Brescia had served his father." From Rome Henry proceeded to attack the peninsular possessions of the Sicilian kingdom, i.e., Apulia, Calabria, and the lands controlled from Naples. The campaign was not a success; the coöperation of the fleets of Pisa and Genoa with the land forces of Germany and Lombardy failed to reduce Naples, and to this military failure was added the humiliation of the capture of Queen (now Empress) Constance.

The first southern campaign

Henry returned to Germany, where he was able to maintain order despite the presence of Henry the Lion and the embarrassments caused by rival candidates to important ecclesiastical offices. He had not abandoned his southern projects, but for the present he had no means to pursue them. What politics denied, fortune granted; in 1193 Richard of England was captured by the Duke of Austria as he was trying to make his way back to England and was handed over to Henry VI as a prisoner. Richard was not only an ally of

Fortune favors Henry VI

Tancred, but also a relative and supporter of Henry the Lion. His capture deprived both of Henry's enemies at once of a valuable political asset. Moreover, the King of France and John, heir apparent to the throne of England, were anxious that Richard be kept in permanent captivity, and to meet Richard's offers of ransom promised even larger sums for his detention. Money was needed for a Sicilian campaign. In 1194 a piece of greater luck occurred, for the Sicilian kingdom was deprived of its leader by the death of Tancred, and no one who approached him in ability could be found to take his place. Now if ever was the time to make Italy imperial.

*The second
Italian
campaign
(1194)*

In 1194 Richard was released upon the payment of an enormous ransom (100,000 marks) and the recognition of England as a fief of the Empire. Henry moved into Italy, procured the support of Pisa and Genoa, and began a triumphal march against the leaderless kingdom of the Normans. Naples submitted after the veriest gesture of resistance; Apulia proved to be no greater obstacle; the straits were crossed; and at Palermo, on Christmas Day, 1194, Henry VI added the Sicilian to his German, Burgundian, Italian, and imperial crowns. Far away in Italy his wife was giving birth to one of the most remarkable figures of history, the future Emperor Frederick II, the "Wonder of the World."

At a diet held at Bari (Apulia) early in the following year, Henry VI made arrangements for the administration of his new territory, for success incited him to further success and he was dreaming of a conquest of the Mediterranean, including, of course, the Holy Land and, perhaps, the Christian Empire of the East. But if he was an Emperor, he did not forget that he was a German. The conquered regions in Italy and Sicily were handed over to Germans; to his brother, Philip of Hohenstaufen, was given the administration of Tuscany and the long-contested lands of the Countess Matilda; Conrad of Urslingen was made assistant to Constance as regent of Sicily and to him was also given the direct control of the district of Spoleto; Markwald of Anweiler was put in charge of the Marches of Ancona and Romagna.

*The power of
Henry VI*

No Emperor since the fall of Rome had held so strong a position; in Italy and in Germany (where Henry the Lion had died in 1195) his rule was supreme. Lombardy was obedient, even friendly; the lands of the Church were occupied and the Pope kept well in check; Apulia, Calabria, Naples, and Sicily were his by coronation and ruled by his wife and his vigorous Germans.

In March, 1195, Henry VI took the Cross and returned to Germany to make the necessary preparations. Arrangements were complicated by the fact that the Third Crusade had ended in comparative failure, that the crusading enthusiasm was on the wane, and that Henry's motive was quite obviously more political than religious. His brother Philip had married Irene, the daughter of the East Roman Emperor, Isaac Angelus. But Isaac had since been deposed and blinded by his brother Alexius. Here was an excuse for war, but not for a Crusade. Further difficulty was found in arranging for a possible successor. Frederick I had had three sons, two of mature years, to protect the succession in his absence. Henry was leaving an infant who would not be more than three years of age by the time the preparations were completed. There was, therefore, no certainty that the fact of heredity would guarantee election. To meet this contingency Henry tried to purchase the surrender of the electoral system in favor of the hereditary principle by offering to make hereditary the great fiefs of the Empire. But as this was already becoming a fact, his only success was to win over a few of the leading magnates to accept this principle and to procure the election of the infant Frederick as king (1196).

Preparations for the Crusade were nearing completion when a violent revolt called him once more to Sicily (1197). The German officials had caused universal hatred by heavy taxation and oppressive administration. The uprising was crushed with the ruthless cruelty of which Henry VI could be capable, but at the very moment of success he was struck down by a sudden illness and died September 28, 1197, at Messina.

The unexpected and premature death of Henry VI was a crushing blow to the House of Hohenstaufen and a disaster for the Empire. In 1197 the Roman Emperor was in fact as well as in theory the most important man in Europe. Henry was master of Germany, Italy, and Sicily, and the prospects were bright of bringing the islands of the Mediterranean and the countries which bordered its southern and eastern shores under imperial control. With his death all this vanished; the Hohenstaufens were deprived of their one capable representative, and the Welfs dared once more to take up the cause so long championed by Henry the Lion. A strong man was needed to dominate Germany, to keep the Italians to their strange loyalty, and to maintain the hold over a papacy irritated by the loss of its allies, its Patrimony, and the lands of Matilda, and

*Revolt in
Sicily (1197)*

*A blow to the
House of
Hohenstaufen*

with a true instinct hostile to the alliance of Germany and Sicily. The infant Frederick was not such a person; but if another were chosen, then there was an end to the hereditary monarchy which Frederick Barbarossa had striven to establish. Would that other be Hohenstaufen or Welf?

Henry VI had realized this dilemma. His great Empire might be saved if the hereditary principle were abandoned; the imperial title might be saved for his little son at the sacrifice of territory. In his will the prospects of a Mediterranean hegemony were subordinated to the interests of the Hohenstaufens. This will is a strange document: in it he recognized the feudal supremacy of the papacy over Sicily and decreed that the direct administration of that kingdom should belong to the Popes, if Frederick should die without issue. If the papacy would recognize the election of Frederick as present king of Germany and future Emperor, then the Patrimony and Matilda's lands should be restored to the Church. Finally, the lands in central Italy were to be held by Markwald of Anweiler as a fief of the Holy See. Hohenstaufen success which had seemed so near was now a very dubious matter.

The leading representative of the House of Hohenstaufen was Henry's brother, Philip, who had inherited the duchy of Swabia in addition to his Tuscan possessions. Philip was a most attractive young man of twenty-two, with a generous disposition and a kindness of character that charmed all who came into contact with him. His virtues were better fitted for a milder age, nor did he have those qualities which distinguish the warrior and the diplomat. He had his father's popularity but none of his power to command. Philip was bound by the election of 1196 to support the claims of his infant nephew, and upon Henry's death he had hurried to Germany to watch over the family interests. The folly of intrusting the destinies of the Hohenstaufen family (to say nothing of those of Germany and the Empire) to a child-king and a regency was apparent to everyone, and the majority of the German nobles and bishops decided (in March, 1198) to elect Philip as king of Germany, leaving to the infant Frederick the kingdom of Sicily.

This election met with decided opposition from the Welfs and from those who hoped to draw private advantage from public disorder. In July, 1198, this opposition party found a leader in Otto of Brunswick, son of Henry the Lion. Otto was about the same age as Philip but like him in no other respect. He was an enthusiastic,

*The will of
Henry VI*

*Philip of
Hohenstaufen*

*Otto of
Brunswick*

even reckless soldier, but possessed of an obstinate disposition which made him incapable of forming sound judgments or of winning friends. His "cause" was a selfish one from the very beginning. His support was limited to a portion of north Germany and the territory along the lower Rhine, but included the most important city of Cologne which adhered to the Welf party because Otto was supported by his uncle, King John of England, and John would permit the merchants of Cologne to trade in London only so long as they supported his nephew. On the other hand, Philip could rely upon the whole of south Germany, scattered districts in the north, the majority of the more important nobles and ecclesiastics, and, above all, upon the great number of *ministeriales* which the family of Hohenstaufen had been careful to maintain since the days of Conrad I.

Had Philip been endowed with his rival's military ardor the struggle for the crown would have been quickly over, but he was surprisingly inactive and when he did move it was to raid rather than to campaign. For ten years there was unintelligent fighting, plunderings with little object other than plunder, cruel deeds without excuse—a decade of civil strife which cannot be dignified with the name of war. The outstanding features were the bewildering frequency with which Herman of Thuringia and the king of Bohemia changed sides, and the stolid resistance of the citizens of Cologne to the massed attacks of the Hohenstaufens. By 1207 Otto and his cause were obviously lost.

Throughout these years both sides sought recognition from Pope Innocent III, a man who occupies a place in the Church alongside Gregory the Great and Hildebrand. Innocent was a member of the Conti family, prominent among the Italian nobility, and had attended the University of Bologna where he studied law and theology, subjects that formed the very being of the universities which were springing up throughout Europe. He had a majestic dignity becoming his exalted office; his legal studies had made him as zealous for the rights of the Church as ever Frederick Barbarossa had been for those of the Empire. He firmly believed in the supremacy of the Church over the State; in the Pope as absolute ruler of the men and actions of the Church and as arbiter in the affairs of lay society. He realized the responsibilities of the Church, strove for its spiritual and moral regeneration, and combated the infidel without and the heretic within. He had all of Hildebrand's idealism,

*A decade of
struggle*

Innocent III
(1198-1216)

Hildebrand's earnestness of purpose, and the same indomitable will. He could be moved to anger or to tears, and his outbursts of passionate temper were matched by spells of brooding melancholy.

Innocent, who became Pope in 1198, took a very real interest in the affairs of Germany. Not since the days of Henry IV had there been such an opportunity of asserting the claims of the papacy to determine the imperial claimant. Between Philip and Otto there was little doubt where papal sympathy would lie. Hohenstaufen policy, with its latent tendency to unite Germany, Lombardy, the inheritance of Matilda, southern Italy, and Sicily into one great Empire, was distinctly contrary to papal ambitions. On the other hand, the papacy had long been allied with the Welfs, the traditional opponents of the Hohenstaufens. But for a while Innocent assumed an official neutrality, since civil war in Germany gave him a free hand in Italy to revive the old league of the Lombard towns against imperial interference and to recover what he could of the lands of Matilda and those parts of the Patrimony seized by Henry VI. In 1200, however, the fortunes of the Welfs seemed to be on the ebb with every prospect of a Hohenstaufen triumph and the termination of the war. At this point Innocent ended his neutrality with an official proclamation known as the *Deliberatio*. In this important document Innocent argued from the precedent of the coronation of Charlemagne the right of the Pope to provide an Emperor. He then proceeded to discuss the legality of the German elections and the suitability of the candidates. Philip was legally elected, but he was not a suitable person. The Pope must crown the Emperor but, obviously, he need not crown an unsuitable person. Otto, however, was a suitable person and therefore should receive papal approbation. Frederick was rejected on the grounds of expediency.

Otto did not receive this assistance of papal support without paying a high price. At Neuss (1201) he agreed to resign all imperial rights in the Italian districts claimed by the Pope (i.e., Matilda's inheritance and the Patrimony) and to recognize the papal overlordship of Naples and Sicily. The price was too high, the news leaked out, the friendship of the papacy was counterbalanced by the indignation of the Germans, and the "cause" went from bad to worse. In 1203 Innocent began to negotiate with Philip without abandoning Otto, complicating his diplomacy by urging upon John of England the necessity of speedy assistance if Otto were to be saved. Philip was amenable to negotiation, both by disposition and

Papal policy

*The
Deliberatio
(1200)*

*The concession
at Neuss
(1201)*

because of his preparations for the Fourth Crusade, but he was unwilling to abandon the Italian interests of the Empire. Innocent spun out his negotiations with Philip until 1208, when, after the capture of Cologne, the Welf party was left without prospects and without hope. He realized then the futility of continuing the German unrest and came to terms with the ambassadors of Philip. It was agreed that Innocent should recognize the Hohenstaufen as the German king and should bestow upon him the imperial crown. In return, his nephew was to marry Philip's daughter and be enfeoffed with the much-contested districts of Tuscany, Ancona, and Spoleto. This arrangement was never completed, for Philip was dead before the papal legates reached Germany to bring the business to a conclusion. On June 21, 1208, while attending the marriage of his niece, he had been murdered by Otto of Wittelsbach in consequence of a personal grudge.

The sudden removal of Philip, as by a miracle, revived the cause of Otto and the Welfs. The youthful Frederick was still eligible, and he was, of course, the natural leader of the Hohenstaufens, but Germany was weary of war and turned to Otto as an obvious and easy solution of its troubles. Otto, at the suggestion of the Archbishop of Magdeburg, submitted to the formality of a new election and was returned unanimously. To reconcile the Hohenstaufens he married Philip's daughter, Beatrix. In order to add the imperial to the German crown, it was necessary to regain the support of Innocent III. "On 22 March 1209, from Spires, Otto issued a diploma by which he acknowledged the territorial claims of the Papacy in their widest extent; further he permitted unrestricted appeals to Rome in ecclesiastical causes; he renounced not only the right of appropriating the movable property of a deceased bishop as he had done in 1198 and 1201, but also the right to the revenues of vacant churches. As regards ecclesiastical election, he practically surrendered all those rights which had been preserved for the Emperor by the Concordat of Worms. Briefly, he resigned that control over the German Church which his predecessors, and particularly Frederick I and Henry VI, had exercised, on the whole to the mutual advantage of Church and State alike, since the days of Otto the Great."¹

This concession had been made with the sole object of gaining Innocent's support, and Otto had no intention of allowing himself

The Welf cause revives

The declaration at Spires (1209)

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, p. 73.

Welf becomes
Hohenstaufen

to be bound by it once he had become Emperor. Indeed, he had no sooner received the imperial crown from Innocent in 1209 than he showed unmistakable signs of continuing the Hohenstaufen policy, and, most threatening of all, he moved into south Italy to unite Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily to his Empire. With justifiable indignation Innocent III excommunicated his former favorite, released his subjects from their obedience, and worked with the king of France against Otto in Germany as before he had worked with John against Philip.

Otto had never been popular, and the hostility of the Pope encouraged a rebellion in Germany. The Emperor, forced to abandon his campaign in the south, made his way back across the Alps early in 1212. The rebellion was sufficiently general to be disturbing, but, lacking a leader, it had not assumed serious proportions until the previous September, when the malcontent nobles met at Nuremberg and offered the crown of Germany to Frederick, whose age no longer presented an obstacle. The more formal process of coronation took place at Frankfort in December, 1212. The political situation of Germany had reverted to the state of things in 1198, but the conflict of Welf and Hohenstaufen had entered upon its last stage.

The will of Henry VI had left Frederick as King of Sicily but under the feudal supremacy of the papacy, and Constance, at the time of her death in 1198, had intrusted her son to the guardianship of Innocent III. It had always been the papal policy to endeavor to keep Germany and Sicily apart, and it was only natural that Innocent, when he brought Frederick forward in opposition to Otto IV, should insist that the two kingdoms should never be united. Frederick had been undecided at first whether to accept the German crown or not, but once the decision was made he acted with energy. Before leaving Sicily he promised Innocent that in return for the imperial crown he would hand over the kingdom of Sicily to his son Henry. In the year following his coronation at Frankfort he repeated the promises made by Otto at Neuss in an official document known as the *Golden Bull of Eger* (1213).

Germany once more experienced the horrors of civil war and the old party alignments reappeared. Frederick could rely upon the resources of southern Germany, the valuable military strength of the numerous Hohenstaufen *ministeriales*, the moral support of the papacy, the backing of the German Church, and the disturbing diplomacy of Philip Augustus of France. Otto, on the other hand,

The crown
offered to
Frederick of
Hohenstaufen

A new
dilemma

The Golden
Bull of Eger
(1213)

was forced back upon the limited resources of north Germany and the lower Rhine and the very doubtful assistance of his uncle, John of England. In 1214 he coöperated with that unhappy king in a hazardous attack upon France, which ended in the complete rout of the allies at Bouvines. The battle of Bouvines, although fought beyond Germany, extinguished the hopes of the Welf party, and Otto retired to his estates in Brunswick, where he died in 1218. Frederick was left in undisputed control of Germany.

For thirty-five years this king, whom contemporaries with some justification chose to style the "Wonder of the World," was kept busy with the myriad problems of his complicated Empire and spent his time successively in Germany, Italy, and Sicily. The establishment of a uniform administration was perhaps beyond the power of anyone in the thirteenth century, but it is certain that Frederick made no obvious attempt to create one. He was more of a Norman than a German, and he preferred the life in Italy to the rougher civilization of the North. He spent little time in Germany. In 1220, on the plausible ground that it was essential to provide for the government while he was on Crusade, he procured the election of his son Henry as king of Germany. For the rest, he intrusted the care of that kingdom to the great churchmen and to laymen of the *official* classes rather than to the important nobles of the realm.

It may be that he realized that the process of territorial immunity had developed too far to attempt the establishment of centralized government. He relied chiefly upon Engelbert, Archbishop of Cologne, whom he appointed head of the administration. This system had neither the merit of efficiency (for it favored the independence of ecclesiastical estates which was already a danger to the government) nor the advantage of being acceptable to the great ones of Germany, for while the nobles did not object to being left alone, they did resent being left out. Nor did this policy please the thriving cities of the South and West which regarded with dismay any increase in the power of their old enemies, the bishops. Frederick not merely relied upon episcopal administrators, but in an official *Privilegium* granted them exceptional privileges: he abandoned the royal prerogative of seizing the movable property of a deceased bishop (the *jus spolii*); he granted toll and mint rights within their districts; he forbade the construction of castles or the establishment of new towns within their jurisdiction without their

Frederick II
in Germany

The Privi-
legium (1220)

permission; he gave them immunity from the intrusion of royal officials except at the time of the great diets, and he agreed to honor the judgments passed by the ecclesiastical court.

Frederick had spent eight years in Germany, but in 1220 he returned to Italy and did not revisit his northern kingdom for fifteen years. The arrangements which he had made for the administration of Germany may find some excuse for their almost haphazard nature in his haste to return to the South and in his belief that Italy rather than Germany should be the seat of his Empire. From 1220 to 1225 Engelbert acted in the dual capacity of regent and chief administrator with considerable success, due in no small degree to his activity in proceeding against violators of the public peace. But Engelbert was murdered in 1225, and his place was taken by the less efficient and much less attractive Louis of Bavaria, who, in turn, was removed by violence in 1227.

The young Henry now assumed the government in his own right. His training and his associates inclined him to a policy which differed from that of Frederick. He desired to be an independent king of Germany and not a puppet-king, acting under the instructions of an Emperor. He favored the nobles of the kingdom, to whom he hoped to grant the same privileges which his father had bestowed upon the churchmen. He was favored in his turn by a general feeling of resentment in Germany at Frederick's obvious preference for things Italian and his apparent purpose of making Italy the center of the Empire.

Frederick was not pleased with his son's conduct, but the distractions of his conflicts with the Lombard Communes and the papacy, his ambition to add an Eastern crown to the five he already wore in the West, and the reorganization of the government in Sicily prevented him from interfering with Henry beyond the point of reproaching him. Indeed, in 1232 he even went to the extent of giving his official approval to the concessions made by Henry to the lay princes. By his *Concessio in Favorem Principum* Frederick extended the principles of the *Privilegium* of 1220 to the great ones. Upon their estates the Emperor promised that no new castles or cities should be established and that within their territorial limits they could hold markets, strike coins, and administer justice. The cities lost their privilege of extending their protection and authority over the people who resided in the districts adjacent to the city walls (the *Pfahlbürger*). In short, the effect of the grants

*The govern-
ment of
Prince Henry*

*The
Concession
in favor of the
Princes
(1232)*

of 1220 and 1232 was the creation of an extensive number of large areas enjoying an official as well as an actual sovereignty and from which the central authority was, for all ordinary business, excluded.

The *Concessio* did not end the German difficulties. Henry, relying more and more upon the *ministeriales*, continued to follow his independent course, which reached a climax in his definite refusal to obey his father's summons to Italy. Direct and public disobedience could not be overlooked, and Frederick crossed the Alps in 1235 to deal with his rebellious son. Henry's supporters fell away, and Frederick had no difficulty in securing recognition of his authority. Henry was deprived of his kingship in favor of his younger brother Conrad and sent into captivity from which death released him in 1247. For nearly two years Frederick remained in Germany, occupied with the problem of government. In 1235, at a diet held at Mainz, the preservation of internal peace was a matter of great concern and some legislation. The imperial judiciary was given something approaching a system, by the establishment of judicial districts and the appointment of a chief justiciar. Other matters, such as tolls, coinage, and market rights, were dealt with in an attempt to substitute regularity for the perfunctory system which had prevailed heretofore.

In keeping with his desire to eliminate internal friction in Germany, was Frederick's diplomatic treatment of the Welfs. The long feud between that family and the Hohenstaufens was brought to an end when Frederick erected the estates of the Welfs into the new duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg and bestowed it upon the leading member of the family. The Knights of the Sword and the Teutonic Order also enjoyed the imperial favor. These two great military orders directed their crusading ardor against the Slavs with such success that Pomerania was conquered and reorganized into the Mark of Brandenburg, which became the nucleus of the later German Empire. To the north, the defeat of the Danes at Bornhöved cleared the way for the capture of the Baltic trade by the enterprising merchants of Bremen, Lübeck, and Magdeburg.

A great deal of activity characterized life in Germany, as, indeed, was true of Western Europe generally in the thirteenth century. The towns prospered to an amazing degree and had made good use of their wealth and power. They had won no inconsiderable measure of independence from their feudal lords by purchase, by force, or by placing themselves immediately under the Emperor; and they

*Prince Henry
in disgrace*

*Eastward
expansion*

*German
activity*

found their inherent defensive strength of value in maintaining what they had acquired. Town life assumed a regularity in which the force of custom was tempered and controlled by the passage and codification of municipal laws, enforced by municipal officials in municipal courts. There was a deal of building, and some examples indicate that the Gothic style was winning favor over the older Romanesque. Most memorable of all, perhaps, is the evidence of a national literature making use of the German language and presenting the ethics of Christianity with an informality and a charm unknown to the polemics of preachers or to the commentaries of theologians. Walter von der Vogelweide with his following of Minnesingers sang of idealized love and conduct, and did not spare the shortcomings of those whose position whether in Church or State marked them out as men who should instruct by their example. Godfrey of Strasbourg gave to the world his story of Tristram and Iseult, while Wolfram of Eschenbach in his *Parsifal* made immortal the legend of the Holy Grail.

Frederick had encouraged this literary movement and, after 1241, had even come to regard the towns with favor. But the thirty years which he spent in Italy is a fair index of the relative importance he attached to the two countries. Excusable as may be the natural attachment of Frederick for the land of his birth and training, it was a most serious error to abandon the government of Germany to the princes, as a prelude to his attempted subjugation of such powerful opponents as the Lombard Communes and the papacy.

Frederick desired to make himself absolute master of his possessions, a scheme which of necessity aroused the antagonism of the two forces which had resisted a similar effort on the part of his grandfather. The papacy was jealous of its territorial possessions in central Italy and was actively interested in obtaining the lands which Matilda had bequeathed to the Church. Further, it resented any attempt to form a close union between Germany and Sicily, justifiably so in view of the will of Henry VI, which Empress Constance had approved and which Frederick II had confirmed in the Golden Bull of Eger. The papacy continued to repeat the declarations of Hildebrand and Innocent III, affirming the supremacy of the Church over the State, but the impelling motive of the popes was the attainment of territorial independence.

Innocent III had died before Frederick had settled his German

affairs and had been succeeded by Honorius III (1216-1227), a man of less ambition and of milder nature. In 1220 Frederick left Germany and received the imperial crown at Rome. He agreed to restore the Matildan inheritance, granted the clergy an exemption from taxation, and promised to go on Crusade. This crusading vow was a distinct embarrassment and a matter of lasting regret to the young Emperor. He had taken the Cross as early as 1215, but had pleaded the difficulties of his German kingdom as an excuse for nonfulfillment.

In 1225 he was still making excuses, but in that year he married Yolande de Brienne, who, as heiress to the kingdom of Jerusalem, brought him the title to a sixth crown. The year passed, however, without the expected Crusade, for Frederick had turned his attention to Lombardy and at an imperial diet held at Cremona (1226) aroused the suspicions and fear of the Communes by reviving the old claims of authority which Frederick Barbarossa had put forth at Roncaglia. The diet had no further success than to reveal Frederick's hand and to bring into existence a second Lombard League of such strength and determination that Frederick was glad to accept the mediation of Honorius and to renew his crusading pledge.

Honorius died before Frederick came to definite terms with the Lombards and Gregory IX (1227-1241) occupied the papal throne. "His was a fiery nature of inextinguishable passion, which made him at once the sturdy ascetic beloved of St Francis, the enthusiast for the ideal of the Papacy as set forth by Gregory VII, and the hater of the secular genius in whom he discerned its greatest enemy."² Old age had increased his natural impatience and one of his first acts as Pope was to insist upon the speedy performance of the long-delayed Crusade.

In the summer of 1227 Frederick actually set sail for the East but, falling ill, returned three days later. He sent his excuses to Gregory IX, who refused to accept them, entered into correspondence with Frederick's Italian enemies, and issued a Bull of Excommunication against the Emperor. Frederick appealed to Europe against the unreasonable violence of "this secular Pope" and prepared to set out once more for Palestine. He sailed June 28, 1228, an act which stimulated Gregory to renew his Bull of Excommunication and to instruct the clergy and the Military Orders of the Holy

Frederick II
and the
papacy

The Diet of
Cremona
(1226)

Gregory IX
(1227-1241)

The Crusade

² *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, p. 146.

Land to give Frederick no assistance whatsoever. Deprived of this support, Frederick resorted to diplomacy and gained a greater success than had been obtained since the First Crusade. By negotiation he obtained a treaty (1229) from the Sultan, El-Kamil, by which, in return for Frederick's protection in the event of an invasion of Egypt, the Emperor was to receive Jerusalem (the Mosque of Omar excepted) together with the towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

*The Crusade
of the Keys*

Frederick remained in Jerusalem only long enough to crown himself king (for the patriarch dared not bestow his blessing upon an excommunicate) and then returned to Italy. Gregory IX had taken advantage of the Emperor's absence to invade his possessions in southern Italy, an invasion which he vainly tried to dignify with the title of a Crusade. Gregory's bitter attacks by word and deed upon Frederick had merited and received little support, and it needed only the appearance of the Emperor to put an end to his campaigning. The occupied territory was recovered almost without effort, and the Pope with an ill grace agreed to a peace at San Germano (1230). Frederick was released from the ban of excommunication, but he was obliged to grant an amnesty to all who had supported the Pope in the late war and to free the Sicilian clergy from taxation, from lay interference in matters of clerical elections, and from liability to stand trial in the lay courts.

*Frederick II
and the Lombard League*

Although the peace of San Germano was a hollow truce, an open breach between Pope and Emperor was postponed for a few years. Frederick was busy reorganizing the government of southern Italy, which had been dislocated during the Pope's "Crusade," and when that was done he took up the Lombard problem. He summoned an imperial diet at Ravenna, a move which stirred the Lombard League into new life. Frederick found some support among the Lombard nobles, whose power had been appreciably diminished by the growing strength of the great commercial towns. Chief among these supporters was Ezzelin (III) da Romano, whom Frederick favored not only with lands and offices but with the hand of his daughter.

*The battle of
Cortenuova
(1237)*

The revolt of his son Henry in Germany caused a delay in his projected campaign against the League, but in 1237, with a pacified Germany and a strong German supporting force, he took up the offensive. He surprised the League at Cortenuova, where he gained a victory which might have reversed the effects of Legnano (1176).

The leading cities of the League made most generous concessions, but Frederick, by insisting upon unconditional surrender, made the mistake of giving a defeated enemy the courage of despair. Brescia withstood the horrors and rigors of a siege, the League took hope, and Gregory IX felt the time had come to break with the Emperor. In 1239 he once more excommunicated Frederick, released his subjects from their obedience, and launched a campaign of vituperation in which he indifferently termed the Emperor the "Beast of the Apocalypse" and the "Spawn of the Devil." To give a more official (if not more authoritative) note to his denunciations, Gregory summoned a council to Rome in 1241, but the vigilance of Frederick's son Enzio and the admiral of his Sicilian fleet led to the interception and capture of two cardinals and a number of French and Italian bishops who were making their way to the council by sea.

In the midst of this confusion Gregory IX died. For nearly two years (if one excepts the seventeen-day pontificate of Celestine IV) there was no Pope. But in June, 1243, the cardinals agreed upon a lawyer and diplomat who took the ambitious title of Innocent IV. Innocent possessed all the malignity of Gregory IX, much of the energy of Gregory VII, and some of the talent of Innocent III. Both Pope and Emperor professed a willingness for peace, but Frederick could not grant all that Innocent wanted and Innocent would not accept the terms offered by the Emperor. The Pope complicated matters by a spectacular and not at all necessary flight to Lyons and an appeal to the sympathy of Europe. "Our soul is escaped, even as a bird from the snare of the fowler," declared the papal supporters. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," quoted Frederick with more justification. Necessary or not, the move was a strategic one and gave Innocent full scope to pursue his campaign against the Emperor with little fear of direct imperial interference. He received little official sympathy for his actions from the courts of England, France, and Aragon. But he slackened none of his efforts, organized an enterprising publicity campaign against Frederick, sent throughout Germany, Italy, and Sicily Dominican and Franciscan friars, either openly as churchmen or faintly disguised as pilgrims and traders, to undermine the loyalty of the Emperor's subjects, and ended up by calling a general council.

The council was thinly attended, but the members made up for their paucity in numbers by their docility and their readiness to follow the wishes of the Pope. The official agendum of the council

*Innocent IV
(1243-1254)*

*The Council
of Lyons*

included the problem of the Mongol invasion which, under Batu Khan, was terrorizing Eastern Europe; the possibility of a reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Churches; the eternal question of heresy; and the trial of the Emperor. The council dealt almost exclusively with the last. Frederick was represented by his able and devoted counselor, Thaddeus of Suessa, who offered most generous terms of peace on behalf of the Emperor. Frederick agreed to restore all lands taken from the Church since 1239, including reparation for damages arising from the recent hostilities, to accept papal arbitration in the dispute between himself and the Lombard Communes, and to lead, at his own expense, a Crusade against the Mongols and the Carismian Turks who had conquered Jerusalem in the preceding year. Innocent was not satisfied, raised his demands, and without waiting until a reply could be received from the imperial court, brought about through the council the condemnation and deposition of Frederick on the extensive charges of perjury, sacrilege, and heresy. All hope of reconciliation had now vanished, and no recourse remained but submission or war.

Frederick appeals to Europe

Frederick at once issued a manifesto to the kings and princes of Europe, pointing out the general danger of such aggression on the part of the Pope. The document was surprisingly modern in tone, a fact which in part weakened its effect, while his assertion that the clergy as a class were "abandoned to this world and to drunkenness" and that it was the "interest of all princes to deprive them of these vain superfluities, to compel them to salutary poverty" caused widespread dissatisfaction and increased the number of papal supporters.

German unrest

Innocent entered the contest with his usual vigor. He levied heavy taxes in France and England to defray the expenses of his army; he attacked the Emperor in a series of extravagant encyclicals; he made full use of the enthusiastic friars who preached wherever they went and who went everywhere. Acting upon the authority of the deposition by the council, Innocent at once negotiated with the leading German prelates for the election of a new king. The majority of the German princes, lay and clerical, were passively loyal to Conrad, who had received the German crown after the disgrace of his brother Henry; but some malcontent or ambitious ones, under the leadership of the Archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trèves, appointed Henry Raspe of Thuringia (1246) who until his death in the following year carried on a fitful struggle with

Conrad. He was succeeded by William, Count of Holland, who maintained himself for a few more years but with little success.

The civil war in Germany departed from the dreariness which was the usual accompaniment of civil war in that it revealed the presence of two new parties which might be called political. One of these was a group of "Free Towns," so called from the fact that they had obtained a privileged position and recognized no immediate superior but the king and Emperor. These towns were largely to be found along the Rhine. The other party was composed of the "Knights of the Empire," holding their lands directly from the Empire and acquiring by usurpation or charter sovereign rights over their tenancies. They were particularly numerous in the south and southwest. The parties were natural rivals and enemies, for both were ambitious to increase their territories: the towns to assure themselves of a source of food, the knights to increase their revenues, that they might meet the rising costs of food, clothing, and military equipment in an age characterized by a higher standard of living. The position of the knights was further jeopardized by their loss of influence at court, where official positions were now given to men of education and legal training. In the civil war the towns, realizing the value of the monarchy as a bulwark of public order, gave generous assistance to Conrad in men and money, while the knights, finding it difficult to live from their resources, resorted to robbery and the general disruption of the public peace. The one class that might have decided the issue, namely, the great princes, remained aloof with an interested indifference. The only result was a Germany rapidly disintegrating into a chaos of independent or semi-independent sections controlled by towns, knights, or princes. The twilight of the Empire had arrived.

Frederick did not go to Germany during these years of civil war, for Innocent had been busy with the Lombard League and, with his agents, had resorted to every method to discredit the Emperor. "Nothing was too dishonourable, too undignified, too unchristian so long as it served their ends." Frederick relied for the most part upon the Lombard nobles led by Ezzelin and such towns as feared the aggression of the League more than the control of the monarch. Fortune turned against him in 1247 when Parma, which had been loyal, revolted, withstood a siege, and destroyed the town of Vittoria which Frederick had constructed to keep the Parmese in check. Disaster followed upon disaster; suspicions of disloyalty

Party
alignments
in Germany

The tide turns

penetrated even the royal court and the Emperor blinded his own chancellor and former favorite, Peter de Vinea, on a real or fancied charge of treason (1247). Two years later his son Enzio, now king of Sardinia by marriage, was captured by his enemies, who ignored the pleas and threats of Frederick for his release. In 1250 death overtook the defeated and disillusioned Emperor December 13, at Fiorentino.

Frederick is one of the many historical figures who have been called the "First of the Moderns," and if that title has any definite meaning his claim to it is not unreasonable. He was most certainly not of his age. His political program, his attitude toward men, his speculative theories, and the universality of his interests made him unique among monarchs and one of the most interesting of men. His physical appearance was not prepossessing; he "had neither the heroic carriage of Frederick Barbarossa nor the quiet dignity of St Louis." He was red-haired (where he was not bald), weak-eyed, short, inclined to fatness, and altogether so unmajestic that an Arab, with some knowledge of the value of slaves, declared that he would not bring two hundred drachmas in the open market.

He had been well educated and spoke with varying degrees of fluency Italian, Latin, Greek, Arabic, German, and Hebrew. He was a sympathetic patron of literature and art, made some essays into the field of poetry, and attracted men of talent to his court. Nothing failed to interest him, but his interest was always intellectual and never mere curiosity. Zoölogy was a hobby; he made a collection of camels, lions, panthers, white bears, and elephants. He wrote a book on falconry which became the standard treatise on the subject for the Middle Ages and for some centuries after. His interest in medicine was scientific: he established a medical school at Salerno, a University for Liberal Arts at Naples, encouraged experiments in anatomy, and made a statutory distinction between doctors and apothecaries, a distinction which many of our own day fail to appreciate. Mathematics, architecture, chemistry, and physics had also their appeal. His moral character aroused much criticism, but his was the generous and magnificent immorality of Charlemagne in the luxurious setting of an Oriental harem rather than the sordid pursuit of low amours.

Frederick's religious attitude is an enigma which baffles solution. He was ever insistent upon his orthodoxy and was merciless to heretics. He is credited with the saying that the "world has been

deceived by these three impostors — Christ, Moses and Mahomet." But Simon of Tournai had already been burned for this original statement. Other remarks hint at agnosticism, while his generous toleration of Jews and Mahometans aroused widespread suspicion and indignation. He was opposed to the papacy and the inordinate wealth of the Church and its churchmen; but in this he was not alone, and his antagonism was that of a statesman and not that of a religious speculator.

The best proof that his interests were not those of a dilettante is afforded by his reorganization of the Sicilian administration. The kingdom was divided into eleven provinces grouped into two captaincies-general. Over each province was placed a justiciar with criminal jurisdiction. Civil justice was in the hands of bailiffs and judges. A supreme court of justice was presided over by the chief justiciar with the assistance of four judges. No fees were exacted from the poor. The legal system of the kingdom was embodied in the *Liber Augustalis*, a law code designed rather to prevent than punish crime, to protect the weak against the strong, and to guarantee the liberty of the subject. Private wars were forbidden, appeals to the "Judgment of God" in trials were discouraged, and a serious attempt was made to prevent the carrying of weapons by unauthorized subjects.

Taxation, as a result of the many military obligations of the Emperor, was high to the point of oppression and fell upon all classes, lay and clerical. To meet the growing expenses and the increasing loans Frederick hoped to augment his revenues by an intelligent support of trade and commerce. The State maintained a monopoly on the production of such commodities as salt, iron, steel, and silk, but "so as not to fetter industry." "The tax on exported grain was lowered from a third . . . to a sixth, and the Emperor explained . . . that freedom of commerce leads to its increase and to that of public prosperity. He suppressed internal customs as a check on intercourse."³ He established the coinage on a stable gold basis. Agriculture was not neglected: new products were introduced, model farms were built, and lands were cleared of forest or injurious pests. New cities and castles were constructed and the roads and bridges kept in repair.

Frederick wished to rule his kingdom as an absolute monarch, but he did not ignore the value of consultation with his subjects.

Reorganiza-
tion in Sicily

Law

Taxes

Political
experiment

³ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, p. 156.

To the nobles and the clergy, whom the kings of Europe were in the habit of consulting upon matters affecting the general welfare, Frederick added two deputies from every city and fortified town; and twice a year "there were to assemble in five cities solemn courts of the neighbouring prelates and barons with four deputies from each greater city and two of each lesser city and castello." These latter courts were held to hear complaints against officials of the crown, and the indicted officers were sent for judgment to the king or to the provincial justiciar. This participation of the "Third Estate" was not representative government, but it was in advance of anything that Europe had yet experienced.

Estimate

The versatility of Frederick's interests, his recognized knowledge, and the soundness of his administrative organization inspired his contemporaries to call him the "Wonder of the World and the marvelous Innovator," a title he richly deserved. But with him the Holy Roman Empire came to an end save as an ideal. The transfer of the seat of government from Germany to Italy made inevitable the conflict between the Empire with its desire for Italian unity, on the one hand, and the forces striving for local sovereignty, represented by the papacy and the Italian communes, on the other. For that struggle Frederick's resources, weakened by lack of support from Germany, proved inadequate. Frederick failed; but his was "the most brilliant of imperial failures." Where he failed, it is doubtful if any other man could have succeeded, for "among the rulers in the centuries between Charlemagne and Napoleon he has no equal."⁴

Frederick's successors

The twilight of the Empire deepened rapidly into night. Of Frederick's sons, Conrad continued the struggle in Germany, and Manfred, who was illegitimate, represented the Hohenstaufens in Italy. Conrad came to Italy in 1252, but weakened his position by a tactless quarrel with Manfred. He died in 1254, leaving a son, Conradin, as the only legitimate heir of Frederick II. Manfred exercised the function of regent in Sicily and came into inevitable conflict with Innocent IV, who insisted upon the papal overlordship. The quarrel continued under his successors, Alexander IV (1254-1261) and Urban IV (1261-1264). The latter offered the Sicilian kingdom to Charles of Anjou, brother of St Louis. Urban might have pleaded the precedent of Stephen II's appeal to Pepin, but the outcome was most unfortunate, for the French invasion brought

⁴ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, p. 165 and *passim*.

disaster upon the land and contributed in large part to the six centuries' delay before Italy could become a nation. Charles invaded Italy in 1266 and by the victory of Benevento (or Grandella), in which Manfred was slain, gained a kingdom and a crown (1267). The young Conradin, whose hopes of Empire had been disillusioned by the chaos of Germany, made one last desperate attempt to retrieve the disasters which had fallen upon the House of Hohenstaufen by a campaign into Italy. At Tagliacozzo (1268) his army was put to rout, and he himself was captured and sent to an ignominious death at Naples. France succeeded Germany in the "Sicilian inheritance."

*The battles of
Grandella
(1267)*

and

*Tagliacozzo
(1268)*

*The Inter-
regnum*

In Germany the political situation was rapidly approaching dissolution. William of Holland died in 1256. The Hohenstaufens were not strong enough to continue the struggle; the great nobles were interested only in the selection of a weak king who would not jeopardize the independent position they had obtained. A candidate from beyond Germany would have the advantage of holding no extensive lands within the kingdom which might serve as the foundation for the creation of a powerful dynasty. An election was held at Frankfort in 1267; Conradin was ignored, and Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III of England, was chosen in preference to his rival, Alphonse X of Castile. The election has this further interest, that it was entirely in the hands of seven men: the Archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trèves, the Dukes of Bavaria and Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia; and this served as a precedent for subsequent elections and the establishment of the "Seven Electors."

Richard never received the imperial crown and interfered little with the situation in his new kingdom, which he visited but three times in the fifteen years before his death. "For all practical purposes Germany had no king at all," and the kingdom lay at the mercy of the nobles, great and small, lay and cleric, who recognized no law but that of their own making and no authority but that of superior force. What peace remained found fitful shelter within the walls of crowded cities. The Empire had collapsed!

The chapters on the German Empire (XI-XV) were developed from the notes taken by the author while "up" at Oxford University. The obligation of the pupil to his master, Austin Lane Poole, is tardily but most gratefully acknowledged.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GROWTH OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY

THE Empire of Charlemagne had fallen rapidly to pieces under the guidance of his inefficient successors. Division of territory among sons unable to exercise a sufficient control had provided a golden opportunity to local leaders to live in quasi-independence, and to grant only a formal and often reluctant recognition of the royal suzerainty as the keystone or *raison d'être* of the feudal system. The recognized success of some nobles in this respect encouraged the imitative efforts of others, until there was an unmistakable tendency on the part of the nobles to oppose the king whenever he tried to become something more than a suzerain. Feudalism as a fact was opposed to monarchy as an ideal or aspiration. The last representatives of the Carolingian dynasty had failed because they were not able to adapt themselves to the new feudal conditions. Nurtured in an atmosphere of family tradition, which was permeated throughout by ideals of imperialism, they could not and would not recognize this aggrandizement of power by the nobles as anything but an illegal usurpation; and in their attempts to assert their independence they found themselves confronted by a very obvious fact — the supremacy of the barons. The realization of this weakness, and the effort to regain territory as the best defense against their vassals and the only way to make head against them came too late and the House of Charlemagne gave way to the House of Capet.

The Capetian dynasty was founded on the principle that kingship was elective and not hereditary, a principle which the Capetians ungratefully exerted their best efforts to destroy. The rise of this new family presented new problems, new conditions. Hugh, as the elected choice of the nobility, was the keystone of feudalism, a suzerain claiming support and obedience from his vassals. In the eyes of the Church and of the people, steeped as both were in tradition, he was far more than that: he was the successor of the Merovingians and the Carolingians. He was therefore a sovereign, and as such could demand the support, obedience, and devotion of his sub-

jects. It is this struggle "to make the sovereign outweigh the suzerain, that is the keynote of Capetian history."

When Hugh Capet came to the throne, in 987, his territorial power had been greatly decreased, for constant concessions of land and alienation of privilege had been the only sure way of obtaining resources in this contest with the last Carolingians. The royal domain was strewn between the Somme and the Loire — the district known as *Île de France* — and was literally an island of royalty in a sea of feudalism. All about lay the great feudatories: Flanders, Boulogne, Normandy, Blois, Burgundy, and Champagne immediately adjacent; with Brittany, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, Poitou, Auvergne, Guienne, Gascony, and Toulouse farther afield. To geographic obstacles was added a supreme administrative difficulty, for within these great fiefs there were semi-independent areas, smaller counties, viscounties, baronies, and chatellanies. Hugh was fortunate, however, in having for his only serious rival the rather unpopular pro-German, Charles of Lorraine, who showed his opposition by seizing Laon. Only by recourse to treachery could Hugh recover it. In the first year of his reign Hugh assured the continuity of his house by associating his son Robert in the kingship, although not without some opposition, for the heredity of the new dynasty was by no means regarded as an axiom.

Robert the Pious (996-1031), who succeeded Hugh in 996, was unable to bring about much change in the condition of affairs, despite his reign of thirty-five years. After a decade of intermittent fighting he brought the duchy of Burgundy under the royal control, but this important acquisition was lost through the foolish diplomacy of his successor. Robert procured the coronation of his son Hugh in 1015, and when Hugh died substituted another son, Henry, not without a great deal of opposition on the part of his wife, who favored her youngest child, Robert. The barons willingly joined sides with both parties, probably hoping that there would be no coronation at all. This domestic quarrel revealed the weakness of the claims of primogeniture, a lack of strength made even more apparent by the entire neglect of an unmentioned son, Eudes, senior to both Robert and Henry but excluded from the controversy as mentally deficient. A greater danger appeared in the union of the powerful counties of Champagne and Blois — to the east and west respectively of the royal domain. In 1019 Champagne passed by inheritance to Eudes II, Count

*Hugh Capet
(987-996)*

*Robert
the Pious
(996-1031)*

of Blois and Chartres, and the personal enemy of Robert the Pious.

*Henry I
(1031-1060)*

Henry I (1031-1060) added to the royal territory by the acquisition of Sens and Melun, both of which became permanent possessions. But this gain was more than offset by the bestowal of Burgundy upon his younger brother Robert, who had been his mother's favorite and an erstwhile candidate for the throne. Under Philip I, who had been made an associate king in 1059, there was a marked territorial increase. Corbie was attacked and gained by force; the death of the Count of Vermandois gave opportunity for the usurpation of part of that important fief. Simon of Valois withdrew into a monastery and cleared the way for the acquisition of the Vexin. The profitable purchase of Bourges from Harpin the Crusader completed a really important series of additions to the royal domain.

*Philip I
(1060-1108)*

The new French royalty limited its efforts to a comparatively narrow area and therein lay its ultimate success. It developed its power in the pursuit of three principles: first, the establishment of hereditary succession; secondly, the recognition of primogeniture; and thirdly, the gradual extension of the royal domain. The first two principles were combined in the practice of compelling the nobles to elect the first-born son as the succeeding king during the lifetime of the father, and in this the Capetians were aided by the extraordinary fact that for over three centuries no king failed to have a son.

Capetian principles

Under the first four Capetians development was very slow, although the royal domain had been increased by the acquisition of Vermandois, Vexin, on the road to Normandy, and the city of Bourges. The great feudatories, which practically represented a series of foreign nations, checked any centralized administration. Feudal services and obligations were uncertain. Less powerful than some of his own vassals, the king lived as they did, on the income from his own domain, the produce of his farms, and the labor of his serfs.

Administrative changes

The administration of the estates or "manors" which made up the royal domain was in the hands of stewards, as in the days of Charlemagne. Henry I created an artificial administrative area, the *prévôté*, and a new official, the provost, to collect the revenues from the stewards within the district, to act as judge of first instance or to hear appeals in minor cases. The royal court retained vestiges of its

ancient grandeur, for the king continued to be served by his seneschal, his chancellor, his marshal, his constable, and his butler. But these men had made their offices hereditary and were in fact, if not in theory, the government. The king was in a scarcely better position than his vassals; and were it not for his title, the privileges of consecration, and certain honorary rights which he exercised over the clergy (the only real administrative agents he possessed), it would be practically impossible to distinguish him from the rest of feudalism.

With the advent of Louis VI (*le Gros*—as he is called in the chronicles) began a period of rapid development. The royal domain, during the restless times of the past century, had become a fertile ground for petty barons, who had grown in numbers and increased in power until they formed an awkward and even threatening blockade between the royal headquarters and the great towns of the domain. A journey through the domain was almost a military expedition, for these barons were little more than highwaymen. The pages of contemporary manuscripts are filled with the stories of their degradations, ravagings, and nameless cruelties. Chief among them were Hugh de Puiset, Thomas de Marle, and the Lord of Montlhéry, who formed a triumvirate famous for its barbarous cruelty and its refinements of torture.

*Louis VI
(1108-1137)*

It was plain that the king who hoped to make his authority effectual in the great feudatories of the realm must first have his own immediate domain completely under control. It was necessary for the ruler to change his doubtful supremacy as suzerain for the more effective and direct authority of a sovereign. And this must be done first of all in his own domain. It is characteristic of Louis' intelligence that he was able, without compromise of the royal prerogative, to use his duty as a protector of the Church as a pretext for the consolidation of his authority between the Seine and the Loire. The Church was a most valuable ally, if it were not allowed to become dominant. The independence of bishops from lay authority was still in the distant future; their existence, as such, depended largely upon the good will of the king, and they were in consequence ever foremost in sending troops and money in answer to the royal request. It was largely on the complaint of abbots and prelates and with the aid of the episcopal troops and a few of his faithful vassals that Louis began his wars on the neighboring barons. Hugh de Puiset, after many defeats and broken oaths, was overcome and

*The brigands
war*

dispatched to seek absolution in the Holy Land; Thomas de Marle was conquered, and the lord of Montlhèry was fortunately murdered and his lands brought into the royal domain.

Consolidation of the royal domain

The successful termination of the "war of the brigands" was of the greatest importance to the growing monarchy. In the first place, by this steady and continued suppression of the nobles the lands between the Seine and the Loire were brought securely and permanently under the direct control of the Capetians. Here, at least, the king was sovereign and royalty had gained a center from which it could extend its authority. The royal revenues were appreciably increased; men who had formerly served in feudal contingents could now be more easily enrolled in the royal host. Again, the ready answer to the ecclesiastical appeal and the assured protection resulting from the success of the war won for Louis the warm support of the Church. Finally, the king won prestige; a martial monarch is ever dear to his people and acquires the respect of his enemies. As a warrior who, ostensibly at any rate, championed the weak and the oppressed, he was sure of the devotion and support of his common subjects, a support which was growing ever stronger with the budding communes and the increasing importance of municipalities. Justice would be less arbitrary in the royal court, a fact not to be overlooked by the masses.

Spread of royal influence

This conquest of the royal domain did not go on unhampered by outside forces. On the contrary, Louis was constantly compelled to abandon the work in hand in order to interfere in litigations or defend himself from the direct attack of his enemies. In these campaigns the given cause was still the protection of the oppressed. Bourbon was invaded because the young knight Archambaud complained that his uncle had illegally usurped his title and his lands; Auvergne received similar treatment because the count had persecuted the resident bishop; and the murder of Count Charles the Good precipitated a campaign into Flanders.

Trouble with England

Even these considerable activities were not without interruption. Since the success of William the Conqueror, the dukes of Normandy were likewise kings of England and used their royal resources to increase their ducal power. William Rufus had commenced hostilities in 1097 when Philip I had refused his demand for the cities of Mantes and Pontoise. Henry I of England carried on his brother's anti-French policy with equal vigor and more intelligence, for he won over the allegiance of the Counts of Blois and Anjou and

even enlisted the support of his relative, the Emperor Henry V, who threatened the eastern frontier.

Although the German invasion did not prove to be serious, the Emperor being recalled by disturbances at Worms, it did produce what was almost a miracle. In former invasions of foreign origin the French nobility had been divided in its allegiance. But now the nobles of France rallied to the support of Louis VI, and "for a few days at least, the lord of Ile de France was truly King of France." But later Theobald IV, Count of Chartres, Blois, and later of Champagne, allied with Henry I of England in a twenty-five years' war against the French king. That this combination of forces did not result in the downfall of the French monarchy was due as much to the assistance of Louis' vassals as to the constant dissension among the hostile forces. To be sure, Louis was forced by the Treaty of Gisors (1113) to surrender the suzerainty of Maine and Brittany, the only diminution of territorial power in his reign. Against this loss must be set the brilliant diplomacy which resulted in the marriage of his son Louis to Eleanor, heiress to the vast duchy of Aquitaine.

Of scarcely less importance is it that this growing prestige was accompanied by a like growth of internal organization. The governing power of the royal family, of the intimate counselors, and of the assembly of the great nobles whose selfish class interests had adulterated the royal court for generations diminished under Louis le Gros. The former assemblies of nobles became assemblies of prelates; that is to say, of that part of French society least able and least inclined to resist the royal authority. The chancellorship was held by a cleric, bishops and abbots appeared in the councils, and prelates thronged the greater assemblies. The whole of this Church relation is most important. To be on good terms with the Church and yet to keep it under control was Louis' wise policy, and the asylum willingly granted to the exiled Innocent II, the ready support accorded to those councils which aided the Roman see in its bitter struggle with the German Empire, all assured a firmer union and went far to justify the title of the French king as the "eldest Son of the Church." The power of the Pope was more extensive than the power of the king of France. Through this support Louis attempted to introduce the moral influence of royalty into the great fiefs. His chancellor journeyed even to Languedoc to enforce a royal edict in favor of the church of Maguelonne.

*Increased
governmental
efficiency*

*Louis VII
(1137-1180)*

The early years of the reign of his son and successor, Louis VII (1137-1180), were characterized by the same sturdy policy, and up to the time of his unfortunate and ill-fated Crusade there was every opportunity for progress, for both England and Germany were torn by dissensions and contests for succession. But with the Second Crusade came the turning point of the reign. Louis set out at the head of a national army, rich in prestige and the inheritance of his father's glory. Two years later he returned broken in heart and spirit, shorn of his military prestige, and — worst of all — definitely alienated from his wife.

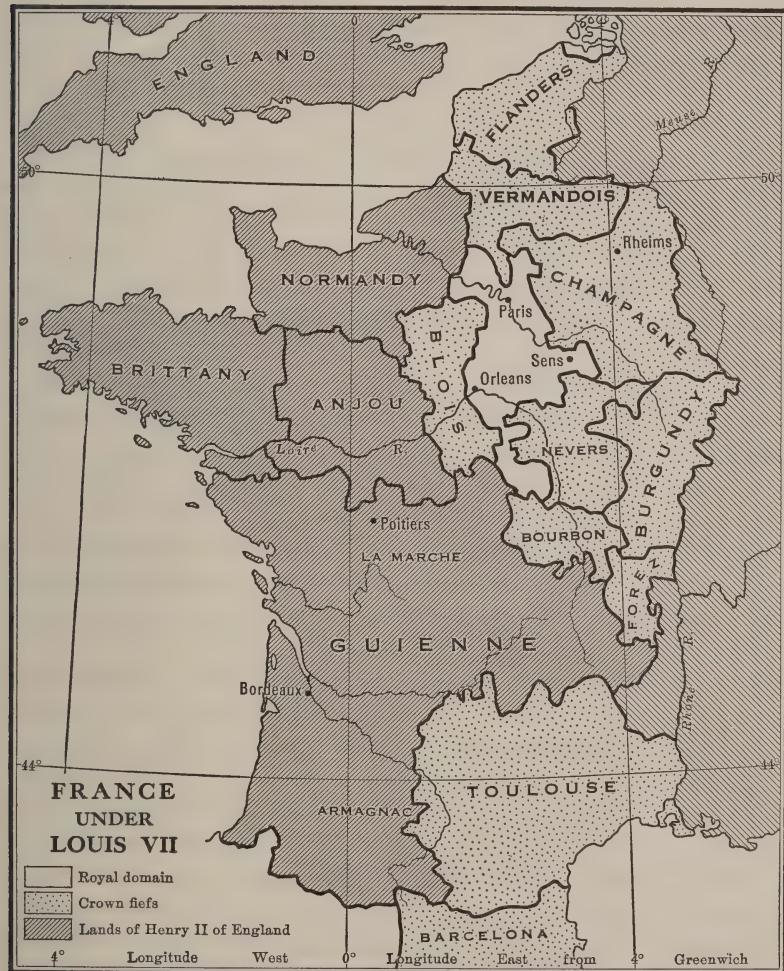
It is a lasting tribute to Suger, Abbot of St Denis, whom he had left in charge of the kingdom, that Louis found the realm much as he had left it. But the king was no longer the same. His former restless energy and continued activity vanished, and in their place came sad indifference, resignation, and growing piety. To a man who believed in the goodness of men, the indiscretions of his wife at Antioch and her ever evident antipathy for him must have been a terrible shock and disappointment. Louis permitted the feelings of a man to outweigh the political interest of a king and divorced Eleanor, who added her great territorial wealth to that of her second husband, Henry of Anjou, Louis' great rival, lord of Normandy, Maine, and Touraine, and soon to become king of England.

But where Louis lost in territorial power he gained in other spheres. As his father had granted an asylum to Innocent II, so he offered Pope Alexander III, harassed by the attacks of Frederick Barbarossa, a haven in France. Louis was regarded as the papal protector wherever the emissaries of the Holy See journeyed, and they journeyed everywhere. It is important to notice how far this influence extended. People from the most distant sections, hearing his praises sung by grateful churchmen and prayers for his health repeated in provincial churches and abbeys, came to regard the king as the head of some great body of which they were a part. Constance of Bretigny wrote to Louis of her devotion and allegiance; the abbots and bishops of Champagne turned to him as an arbiter in their quarrels; the Abbot of Cluny assured him of the support of the Count of Burgundy; Dauphiné, Lyons, and Auvergne professed the same adherence. His sister Constance was beloved by the people of Toulouse; a noble of Narbonne sought to hold his château directly from the crown. These cases, isolated though they may be and concerned with minor points, nevertheless

*The fateful
divorce*

*Growing
prestige*

show a hopeful progress of the monarchical idea. The great feudal nobles might resent the growth of the royal power, but the people, the great masses of the realm, were looking to the crown for protection and support.



Louis also won the favor of the popular classes by his sympathetic regard for the communal movement, by the abundant privileges he granted to settlers in the *villes neuves*, and by his constant regard for justice. The royal authority was concentrated and fortified by a council of ecclesiastics, burgesses, clerks, and commoners, indicat- Administration

ing by its personnel an ever-increasing independence from feudal government. This council gradually assumed control of a major part of the judicial business, and there was a tendency for it to abandon the custom of following the king on his frequent progresses and to take up a permanent residence at Paris. The royal offices ceased to become hereditary and thus gave the crown a firmer hold on the agents of government. The royal domain was still held under strict control, and law and order were enforced by edicts and injunctions.

The reign of his son Philip II (1180-1223), surnamed "Augustus," deserves to be "marked as an epoch in the history of the French monarchy, in that it succeeded in raising the royal power far above the highest point hitherto reached."¹ It is an epic of wars, clever sieges, and brilliant battles; a half century of diplomatic intrigues and successful conquests. The insignificant domain of Louis VII, consisting of scarcely more than the Ile de France, with no outlet to the sea and hemmed in on all sides by aggressively encroaching feudatories, was transmuted into a vast kingdom which included Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and parts of Poitou, with easy access to the Channel, and the wealth of the great commercial town of Rouen. And over all of this the king was sovereign as well as suzerain. Not only were these official acquisitions cemented to the monarchy, but Philip Augustus exercised a pseudo-protectorate over Champagne, Burgundy, and to some appreciable extent Brittany.

Philip Augustus endowed the Capetian monarchy with three essentials for effective government which had hitherto been conspicuously absent; a docile and readily manipulated body of officials, a regular and certain supply of money, and an efficient soldiery which gave continuous service. One of the main features of the earlier government had been the *Curia Regis*, a group of feudal nobles who surrounded the king, gave their counsels, and if they were sufficiently powerful, as was generally the case, dictated his policy. This body, however, had been appreciably weakened by the policies of Louis le Gros and Louis VII, who summoned the *Curia* but rarely and were careful to control its personnel so far as possible.

Under Philip Augustus the powers of this great body passed into the hands of a few intimate counselors, solid, trustworthy characters, often of humble origin, whose private and personal interests would

Philip
Augustus
(1180-1223)

Territorial
gains

Philip's con-
tribution to
the French
monarchy

Curia Regis

¹ Kitchin, G. W., *History of France*, I, p. 276.

counsel them to carry out the dictates of the royal policy. To weaken still further the feudal influence on the central advisory board, the important offices of seneschal and chancellor were suppressed. Under Louis le Gros and his son the citizen class had acquired a limited admission into governmental functions. Philip extended their field of operations and employed them as definite agents of the government, although they hardly advanced beyond the state of approving by acclamation the plans and legislative creations of the king. Yet a precedent had been established; the civic body, especially that of Paris, was given an increased sense of importance and came to feel that it was part of a government which in consequence it was bound to defend. Once the king had the official body which immediately surrounded him under favorable control, then and not until then could he hope to attain any great measure of success in the other branches and departments of government.

Philip was but fifteen years old when he began to rule alone. "Coming so young to his crown, he grasped with all a boy's eagerness at the dignity of the royal name. Proud of disposition and not without a tendency to romance, he at once set his kingship in his own mind above all, far above even the greatest of his neighbours,"² and his reign was filled with action. He resented the attempted exercise of a regency by the nobles, especially by the House of Blois-Champagne, his mother's family, and that of Flanders, into which he had married. For years he pursued a policy (not remarkable for its honesty) of stirring up jealousies and antagonisms between Henry II of England and his four sons, and also among the sons, both before and after the old king's death, playing each off against the other, and so weakened the English power that at length the wealthy and desirable province of Normandy fell into his hands. The result was more glorious than the doing. Henry II was unlucky in his sons, whom Philip Augustus found it easy to lead into open revolt, and in his queen, who might have been Philip's mother. The opposition of the sons supported by the King of France was too strong for the aging King of England.

Philip's policy worked as effectively against the sons as against the father, for fraternal loyalty was as weak as filial. Richard I was as encompassed by plots as ever his father had been, the unhappy John taking the rôle of villain in the piece. The shamelessness of

*Burgher
interests*

Ambition

*His English
policy*

*against
Richard I*

² *Ibid., loc. cit.*

Philip and John stands revealed against a most unfavorable background. In 1190 Philip and Richard publicly renounced their hostilities and joined the Third Crusade. Philip, however, returned after the fall of Acre and took advantage of Richard's continued absence in the Holy Land to undermine his power at home. In this he enjoyed the willing coöperation of the man whose disregard for the rights of others was to connect his name inseparably with the establishment of English liberty. As in any melodrama, the villains established an early superiority. Richard was captured by the Duke of Austria as he was making his way home from the East and handed over to the Emperor Henry VI, who held his famous prisoner for ransom. Richard was an exceedingly valuable prize, for Philip and John offered the Emperor attractive sums to keep him in confinement. When Richard finally obtained his release on a ransom which impoverished England, he put an end to the machinations of Philip and John. On the frontier of Normandy and France he built the famous Château-Gaillard, just failed to capture Philip Augustus at Gisors, and signed a five years' truce with the King of France at the Pope's request. But a few months later he was killed in a miserable quarrel in Limoges, and Philip was freed from a dangerous antagonist (1199).

against John

As Philip had used Richard and John against Henry II and John against Richard, he now used John's nephew, Arthur of Brittany, against the new English king. Arthur had a claim to the English throne, for his father, Geoffrey, had been John's elder brother. He was useful, moreover, as an excuse to fill the Breton castles with French soldiers. But Philip had no scruples in abandoning his protégé as soon as it would serve his purpose to do so. In 1200 Philip agreed with John to withdraw his support from Arthur, whose subsequent fate is uncertain; but it is more than likely that he was murdered by his uncle while John had him in his possession at Rouen in 1203.

John was no match for Philip Augustus in the game of subtle politics and gave almost immediate occasion for the French king to attack him openly. John proceeded to marry Isabelle of Angoulême, ignoring the inconvenience that the lady was already betrothed to his vassal, Hugh of Lusignan, the Count of La Marche. Indignant at this conduct which violated feudal privilege as it outraged common decency, Hugh appealed to Philip Augustus as his overlord. Philip was quick to capitalize this opportunity. He summoned

John before the royal court to answer the complaints of his vassal. Upon John's refusal to appear, Philip began the pleasant and easy task of alienating the allegiance of John's Norman vassals by the simple and direct method of bribery and of winning over the towns by the offer of charters or commercial favors. This policy was so successful that Normandy—"like a ripened pear"—fell into his hands almost without a blow in 1204. And with Normandy went Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, making this the largest and most important acquisition of territory since the temporary gain of Aquitaine, lost by the foolish divorce.

Philip's troubles were not quite over. A powerful coalition of French barons led by the Count of Flanders, jealous of the enormous increase of royal power, joined John of England and Otto IV of Germany in an effort to reduce the growing strength of the French king. By the valor of faithful knights and the sudden and timely aid of troops from the towns and communes, eager to show their gratitude to a royalty which had of late favored them, the coalition was overwhelmingly defeated at the battle of Bouvines (1214).

Feudalism had offered the greatest obstacle to a firm consolidation of monarchical power. Direct legislation to subordinate this body to the crown would have been as futile as baying at the moon, had the feudal baronage not first been brought to subjection by force. This force Philip very fortunately possessed, and after the long series of military ventures which culminated in the decisive battle of Bouvines, the barons of France found themselves in a condition too weak and divided to offer effective resistance to the growing monarchy. The defeat of the great coalition meant the supremacy of monarchy over feudalism. Once the feudal opponents had been crushed it was possible for the king to issue a long series of edicts which altered the hitherto sacred feudal law, with each alteration tending toward consolidation of central power.

By an edict which proclaimed that when an estate was divided among a number of subvassals, each of these subvassals held his fief directly, not from the immediate lord according to ancient usage, but from the suzerain of the fief, the intricate complexities of intermediate relationships were largely removed, and the king as suzerain of suzerains was brought into closer touch with the lesser vassals. Throughout the reign there were evidences of a more direct and complete control of the feudatories; royal agents appeared throughout the realm watching over and upholding the royal interests; the

The acquisition of Normandy

The battle of Bouvines (1214)

Philip attacks feudalism

great barons even submitted their private transactions for the royal approval. Marriages, wills, alienations, all were referred to him for his sanction. Nor was the Church allowed to obstruct the course of monarchical progress. It must furnish its feudal contingents, and the clergy were made liable to civil trial and judgment in cases falling within lay jurisdiction. Restrictions were placed on its aggrandizement at the expense of the realm: "No burgher can leave more than one-half of his property to a son entering the Church." There was nothing very striking or revolutionary in Philip's policy toward the Church, but he was ever careful to restrain any disintegrating tendencies which might proceed from an unlimited exercise of ecclesiastical claims.

Monarchical expansion is very evident in connection with the towns and communes. The practice of granting charters and privileges had begun under Philip's grandfather but was limited to settlements on the royal domain. Philip greatly extended this practice, with no apparent regard for territorial limits. The royal interest in towns expressed itself in three directions: in the creation of a governmental device, known as *sauvegardes*, established when towns, villages, abbeys, groups of merchants or artisans, feeling the need of strong protection, placed themselves under the direct authority of the sovereign; in the *pariages* or associations of the king with the communal administration; and in the commune.

The system of *pariages* had two obvious advantages: on the one hand, it was the occasion of partial enfranchisement of the civic community which paid a fixed percentage of its revenue in lieu of uncertain and irregular taxation, while the king's share in the *pariage* was a step toward ultimate annexation. In the communes, which in fact enjoyed varying degrees of political liberty but which were generally characterized by having as a nucleus a sworn association whose members had taken an oath to defend or to increase their political privileges, royal intervention took definite shape. Philip's motive in bestowing grants with such largesse is quite obvious. The grant of a royal charter, entailing as it did a recognition of the royal supremacy, greatly facilitated the maintenance and regulation of order and justice; wherever there was a royal charter the royal authority bid fair to be enforced; the commune was a powerful asset in consolidating the new conquests, and it is interesting in this respect to notice that in the conquered territory charters were first granted or confined to those towns which were pivot points in the

Marches. The granting of charters also facilitated the collection of revenue. The usual condition of the grant entailed the substitution for feudal dues, rights, and levies, of a fixed annual payment in currency which did away with the irregularity of revenue and the difficulties of collection.

But above all these important advantages, this direct relation of town to king went far to neutralize whatever local influence might be brought to bear upon the scattered communes. The danger from this source was lessened and the general efficiency of administration was strengthened by the institution of a body of officials called bailiffs, appointed and salaried by the king. These formed an intermediate step between the old provosts and the king, protecting the people from the rapacity of ambitious collectors and assuring a more honest and correct payment to the royal treasury. If further check on the provosts were necessary, it was in large manner supplied by the obligation of the collector to consult with the leading burgesses before assessing the taxes or inaugurating local legislative measures. On the other hand, the bailiff was expected to consult with the provosts before adopting any new policy.

Bailiffs

In all this versatile and ubiquitous governmental activity there was a purposeful attempt to bring the realm under direct control. In addition to the popular favor upon which a victorious monarch can always rely, in addition to the great prestige which centered around the conqueror of three kings, an emperor, and a coalition of feudal magnates, there was at the end of the reign an administration in the hands of an obedient, responsible, and trustworthy body of officials. Regular and definite payments of money by the great civic communities, in place of uncertain feudal dues, provided the means of maintaining a well-fed, promptly paid, and therefore reliable army. Supervision and control by intermediary officials directly responsible to the crown formed the all-essential link in consolidating this great centralization of monarchical authority. Philip Augustus at his death in 1223 left the government endowed with all the basic principles which his successors needed to put the finishing touches upon a work so nearly completed.

The rule of his son and successor, Louis VIII, which lasted but three short years, must be considered as a continuation of his father's work. "His simple mission was to gather the fruits of his predecessor's labours." His whole reign was occupied in turning to the profit of the crown the result of the collapse of the English power

Louis VIII
(1223-1226)

in France and of the triumph of the Albigensian Crusade. Taking advantage of the local opposition of Poitou to the rule of the English, Louis made a triumphal march through the fertile province and added it to the royal domain. Then answering the appeal of Pope Honorius he turned his attention to the South.

The Albigensian Crusade is a distressing chapter in the history of Christianity and an important one in the history of France. The Albigensians derived their name from the town of Albi in Toulouse, where they seem to have collected in greatest numbers, and their Faith from the sect known as the Cathari, which in turn goes back to the Paulicians and the Manichæans. The dominant characteristic of the Cathari was a dualism which conceived of an eternal conflict between good and evil. In the development of this doctrine *matter* was identified with evil and therefore to be avoided so far as was humanly possible. The logical result was intense asceticism, disapproval of marriage, denial of the efficacy of the sacramental system, and condemnation of the gorgeous splendor of the Roman episcopate.

Languedoc had been fortunate in the past, for it had been far less affected or disturbed by the destructive inroads of the barbarians than Languedoc to the north or Italy and Spain to the east and west. It had been left to work out its own development and had revealed its inherent genius in the early flowering of Provençal civilization and culture. It provided a favorable atmosphere for the reception of new or unconventional ideas.

The strict asceticism of the "perfect" members of the Manichæans or Cathari must have cast a sad light on the luxurious and uxorious clergy of Languedoc. The disregard, even abhorrence, of these Albigensian preachers for material things and worldly splendor reacted unfavorably upon the gorgeous finery and extensive retinues of the Catholic bishops, and their vernacular translations of the New Testament afforded little explanation for the existing papal theocracy. It is small wonder that the quickened intellects of the South saw the manifest inconsistency and discrepancy between the Church of the early Fathers and the "Reformed" theocracy of the twelfth century, and were drawn toward the more simple sincerity of the heretical sect. But the Albigensian sect was dangerous to anyone not devoutly and earnestly religious. Its total disregard for property and its restrictive legislation in material things could tend toward nothing less than a complete overturning of the whole struc-

ture of existing society. There can be little doubt that this threatened overthrow of society, this widespread movement of secular iconoclasm, or at best communism, called for suppression apart from any consideration of dogmatic irregularities. It is beyond question, however, that the motive which actuated the Pope in preaching the Crusade was a religious one. The Church—as defender of the Faith and as the fountainhead of Christian dogma—could not countenance this new spirit which threatened to undermine the whole framework of medieval theology. But the Crusade once under way, Church and State, bishop and prince, prebend and fief were too closely connected to prevent a political element from coming in, gradually gaining weight, and ultimately dominating the action of the campaign.

The early phase of the movement showed a character strictly religious. As early as 1187 a commission of investigation and exhortation had been dispatched to attempt the annihilation of the false beliefs, but the movement was too firmly rooted and the mission was a failure. The appearance of Arnauld, Abbot of Cîteaux, as papal legate with unlimited authority over the bishops of the infected country stirred up little but the opposition of those very bishops who resented his intrusion; while his gorgeous panoply even called forth the disapproval of the Bishop of Osma, who saw clearly enough that doctrine and religious zeal must be met with weapons of the same temper. The legate fell back upon the accustomed method of excommunication to force into line Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, who had encouraged the heretics. The unfortunate murder of another legate, Peter of Castelnau, in 1208 precipitated the Crusade in all its force.

Philip Augustus would take no part in the Crusade himself, for among other things he resented the papal claims to dispose of the property of heretics. But many of his vassals went, chief among them the Duke of Burgundy, and Simon, Count of Montfort. Even Raymond of Toulouse was forced to join the invaders. The Crusade was fiendishly cruel in its procedure. The holocaust at Béziers, where 7000 were burned in a single church and the town destroyed “from end to end and from side to side,” the looting of Carcassonne, the slaughter and indiscriminate pillaging of Catholics as well as heretics, since “God would know His own,” show an adulteration of a purely religious enthusiasm. The battle of Muret (1213) left the Crusaders of the North in possession of the South. Simon de

*The cause of
the Crusade*

*Murder of
Peter of
Castelnau*

Carcassonne

Montfort became Duke of Narbonne and Count of Toulouse, Béziers, and Carcassonne, a position which was confirmed by the Lateran Council of 1215.

But neither Simon nor his son Amaury were able to win the affection or compel the obedience of their new subjects. Amaury offered his lands to Louis VIII in return for military assistance. The French king responded to this appeal, made a triumphal progress into the South, but caught the "camp fever" so prevalent in the days before a medical and sanitary corps became a recognized and essential part of an army, and died at Auvergne (1226). Two years later Queen Blanche as regent signed the Treaty of Meaux, which gave France immediate possession of Narbonne, Maguelonne, Nîmes, Carcassonne, and part of Albigeois. Toulouse, Foix, and the Agenais were handed back to Raymond VII on the understanding that his daughter Jeanne was to marry Alphonse of Poitiers, the brother of the new king, and that in the event of the couple dying childless the whole inheritance should pass to the French crown.

It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the Albigensian Crusade. For the first time in centuries the King of France could exercise direct control over a territory which covered much of the region from the English Channel to the Mediterranean. Yet before he died Louis VIII committed an act which, had his successors not been of vigorous character, might have fatally weakened the central power and have rendered futile the great and difficult successes of Louis VI and Philip Augustus. He broke with the old tradition of handing down the royal domain intact to his eldest son the very tradition which had formed such a solid and substantial basis for the royal authority. Louis, in his great affection for his children and in order to prevent discord, adopted what may seem a natural but was perhaps an impolitic course by dividing the great realm among them. These divisions were termed "appanages." Henceforth, vast princely domains sprang up and a new era of dissension was opened after the feudal danger had been successfully overcome. For the next three centuries the internal history of France centered around the court and the quarrels of these appanages.

The death of Louis VIII left the government in the hands of the "Spanish woman," Blanche of Castile, for the man who was to become the most lovable of kings, to be known as "St Louis" to posterity and as "Brother Louis" to the gentle jesters of his own court, was only a youngster of twelve. Blanche was remarkable for

The Treaty of Meaux (1228)

The system of appanages

Blanche of Castile

her piety in an age rich in pious characters, but she never permitted her devotion to the Church to jeopardize the interests of the State. Her piety was matched by her beauty, her charm, her strength of will and her very real ability. "She was a woman in sex, a man in counsel and worthy to be compared with Semiramis." She took a very serious interest in the training of the future king, and there was something almost Victorian in her control over Louis and his young queen, Margaret of Provence.

The task of regency was not an easy one. The nobles who had seen their power fall away under the vigorous policy of Philip Augustus thought the time had come to restore the *ancien régime*. An impressive coalition, headed by Peter Mauclerc of Brittany, Henry III of England, the Duke of Burgundy, Raymond of Toulouse, and Philip Hurepel, Count of Boulogne and son of Philip Augustus by Agnes of Meran, set out to do — no one knows what, and the coalition least of all. Perhaps the leaders wanted to urge the claims of Hurepel to the throne or at least to the regency; perhaps they merely wanted to embarrass the government; more likely each had his own fish to fry. No definite plan is discernible, and the whole movement was "more noisy than methodical and more ambitious than formidable." There was a good deal of malicious gossip which suggested that the queen mother was sending good French money into Spain, that her appreciation of the poetry of Theobald of Champagne was more than æsthetic, and that the papal legate would be better off at home.

But the coalition reckoned without its hostess. Five years sufficed to bring about its complete disintegration, though indeed it had no real unity or organization to begin with. Only once was the coalition reasonably near success. In 1229 the king and his mother were at Montlhéry, and the rebellious nobles attempted to keep the royal family from reaching the capital. But when the "good town" of Paris heard this news it dispatched all of its available militia and lined the road from Montlhéry to such purpose that the coalition abandoned its program. Louis never forgot this demonstration of loyalty.

When the regency came to an end in 1235 a new coalition formed against the crown. It was more serious because it had a more definite program. The Poitevins under the leadership of Hugh of Lusignan resented the installation of Alphonse, the king's younger brother, as their overlord and broke out in rebellion. Henry III of

*The troubles
of the regency*

*The "affair"
at Montlhéry*

*Louis IX
(1226-1270)*

England, hopeful of recovering the lost Plantagenet influence, sent men and thirty hogsheads of "esterlings" to aid the rebels, and even Raymond of Toulouse showed his sympathy by massacring the Dominican inquisitors who were busy eradicating the last traces of Albigensian heresy in his country. Louis invaded Poitou and by the victories of Taillebourg and Saintes (1242) put an end to the revolt. With the exception of intermittent hostilities with Henry III, which lasted until 1259, there was no further trouble.

The policy of Louis IX can be quickly summarized. He was no diplomat in the ordinary sense of the word, perhaps because he was a saint. He refused to turn the embarrassments of foreign kings to his own advantage or to the aggrandizement of France. He remained neutral in the titanic struggle between Frederick II and the papacy, asked no reward for his neutrality, and made no effort to recover Lorraine. In 1259 he ended the outstanding disputes with England and Aragon by treaties which French historians only approve as confirming the piety of the saint. Henry III was permitted to retain his feudal rights over Guienne, Gascony, Quercy, Limousin, and Périgord, with the reversion of Saintonge and the Agenais if Alphonse of Poitiers should die childless. For his part Henry renounced his claims to Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Poitou, and Touraine. James of Aragon surrendered his pretensions to Foix and Languedoc though keeping Montpellier, and Louis abandoned the French claims to Barcelona.

Louis and his Crusades

Louis' interpretation of the duties of a Christian king led him to undertake two Crusades against the "infidel" Saracen. Both were failures. The first, which kept the king away from France from 1248 to 1254, began with the easy capture of Damietta; but rashness and the amazing disregard for elementary strategy which is characteristic of the Crusades in general brought defeat at Mansourah and the capture of the king. He was ransomed at tremendous cost, and there is a pathetic irony in the fact that the silver casket which contained the heart of the greatest crusader — Richard of England — was melted down to pay the ransom of the gentlest. The second attempt was made in 1270, against Tunis and at the very height of summer. Sickness swept through the army and on August 25 the king succumbed to its attack.

St Louis was the very personification of feudalism at its best, for feudalism as an ideal insisted upon the protection of rights and the performance of duties. He was no more a statesman than he

was a diplomat. He seems never to have noticed the trail which his grandfather had so clearly blazed or to have attempted any definite program of monarchical development. He was completely a child of the thirteenth century, albeit the most perfect child. He was not ahead of his times, as was his abler contemporary Frederick II, and perhaps that is the secret of his greater success.

Louis IX was an extremely earnest man who felt that his position as king emphasized his duties as a Christian. He deserves, if any king does, the honored title of saint. His religious fervor was sometimes excessive and in the case of the Crusades unfortunate for his kingdom and fatal to himself. His practice of submitting to periodic scourging at the hands of the clergy, his scrupulous observance of the fasts, his personal attention to the lepers were frequently criticized by his contemporaries as inconsistent with the dignity of a king. The criticism passed unheeded. With the intolerance which in those days inevitably accompanied strong faith, he persecuted without remorse and advocated the speedy termination of any argument with a Jew by the simple and direct method of plunging one's sword into his stomach "as far as it will go." He was credulous to the point of superstition; but for this we may well be grateful, since that exquisite lantern of stone which is called Sainte-Chapelle was built to contain the Crown of Thorns! He was charitable, humble, patient, simple in his diet and in his dress, "the very ideal of a loyal knight and a Christian king."

Louis gave the French crown a moral dignity which was perhaps as valuable as the territorial acquisitions of his father and grandfather. He regarded himself as the Fountain of Justice, and it is pleasant to picture him seated beneath the oak at Vincennes, dispensing kindly justice to men of every degree. To each his due and each to his duty was his guiding principle and explains his scrupulous legality and the high valuation which he placed upon justice. This respect for law enabled him to strike a just balance between the claims of Church and State. The law, tempered with justice, became the strongest foundation of the throne. It was through the law that he was able to mitigate some of the rougher features of feudalism. He put an end to private warfare and judicial duels throughout the royal domain and by the *quarantaine* required that quarreling nobles in other feudatories give forty days' notice before commencing hostilities, within which period relatives might declare their neutrality in the dispute. The *assurement* allowed a vassal who received

His character

*Importance
of his reign*

*Efforts to
establish order*

insufficient protection from his lord to seek security elsewhere. Through the law he struck a blow at the feudal courts of the royal domain, for he declared many cases to be exclusively reserved for a royal hearing and extended the right of appeal from other baronial courts.

Administrative changes

The general administration was improved in tone and efficiency, although here one may suspect the preponderant influence of the legists. The *palais*, once composed of domestic officials and high monarchical functionaries, gave place to the *hôtel du roi*, consisting of clerks and knights forming a military escort and an intimate council separated from purely domestic officials. The rôle of the intimate council increased with every extension of authority; clerks and knights, burgesses and lawyers became agents of the central power, administrators of the *fisc* following the king or sitting in permanent *parlement*. But the rapidly accumulating amount of administrative, judicial, and financial business became too vast to be handled conveniently by one body, and the *hôtel du roi* underwent a tripartite division. From the Intimate Council there grew the Grand Council, to deal strictly with judicial affairs, which became the later *Parlement*, and a second body called the *Chambre des Comptes* which, as its name indicates, dealt entirely with measures of finance. What remained of the old intimate council followed the king whenever he journeyed throughout the realm and served as his administrative agents and advisory body, while the *Parlement* became sedentary, settled down at Paris, and drew to itself professional councilors, clerks, knights, bailiffs, officials of the crown, barons, prelates, all in fact who saw therein a highway leading to the goal of their ambitions.

The division of the Curia Regis

The Inquisitors

Not content with such reformation of the central government by division and limitation of functions, St Louis enacted widespread legislation for local improvements and in favor of industry. The *Missi Dominici* of Charlemagne were revived under the name of *Enquêteurs* and made a permanent part of the central government. By an ordinance of 1254 the exploitation of the people by local officials was combated; each bailiff (or *seneschal* as the officer came to be known in the South) was to take oath to do justice and to uphold the rights of the king and of the local franchises; he was to receive no presents nor was he to give any, to have no personal or monetary relations with anyone in his district; he could not marry a resident of his district, or procure fiefs there, or use local help; his administration was to be personal and on no account by proxy; and

(a new measure) he could not leave the district until forty days after his term of office expired so that any complaints might be registered and considered. The mayors of the towns and villages were required to submit their accounts periodically for the inspection of agents of the *Chambre des Comptes*.

In aid of industry Louis reformed the coinage to make it better than the seigniorial mintage and enacted that it could circulate throughout the realm, that it should be the only legal tender in the domain, and that the seigniorial coin must differ enough to avoid any chance of confusion. With the help of Stephen Boileau, Provost of Paris, he compiled a "Book of Trade," which for centuries formed the code of industrial laws and customs, unified business administration, and fostered the growth of civic corporations. Landholders were made responsible for the upkeep of the roads and bridges in their immediate neighborhood, and trade was declared free of duties within the royal domain. In the interests of morality the manufacture of dice was prohibited.

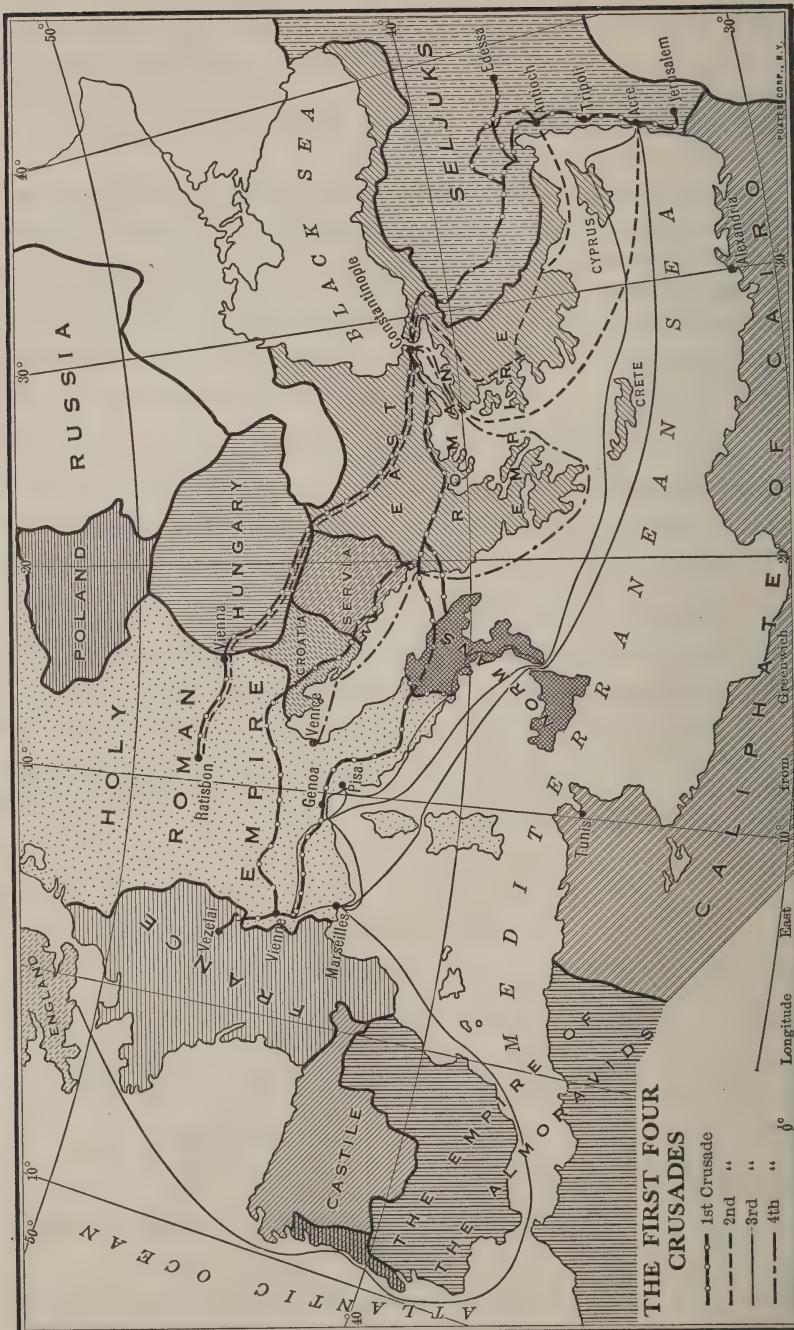
It was in Louis' reign that the Sorbonne was established, and under his patronage the university attracted the most learned men of the age, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, and Roger Bacon. His sense of justice and his strong humanity, his charity and his complete forgetfulness of self in his earnest desire to be of help to others explain the anxiety of the poet who cried: "To whom can the poor people complain, now that the good King, who loved them so, is dead?"

Economic legislation

The "Book of Trade"

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CHAPTER XVII

THE CRUSADES

HISTORICAL Christianity, reasoning from the assumption that it was the one true religion and that it had a mission to bring men to salvation, was intolerant by nature and aggressive by choice. To "fight the good fight" was an injunction, expressed or implied, which no one would question, although each might interpret for himself. So it was that Christians had always regarded the infidel with horror, a being whom it was a blessed thing to save, even at the point of the sword. The Church Militant was an idea which had always been present and of which the Crusades were only a more dramatic expression. Clovis had been congratulated for his part in converting the Franks, although it is doubtful whether the Franks had much choice in the matter; Charlemagne was praised for the conversion of the Saxons after twenty years of bloodshed and legislative cruelty.

The direction of the Church Militant against the Saracens had been considered more than once before the setting out of the so-called First Crusade. Pope Sylvester II had contemplated the recovery of Jerusalem; Gregory VII had been on the point of leading a Crusade himself (together with the Empress Agnes) against the Moslems. A crusade in everything but name took place in 1087, when Pope Victor III blessed the standard of the Pisans and the Genoese as they were about to set out on the expedition which resulted in the capture of Mahdijah (Tunis). As a further inducement he is reported to have promised remission of sins to all who would take part. When the First Crusade was launched, nine years later, it was, from one point of view, only another effort in the struggle between the Christian and the Mohammedan which, in Spain, in the islands of the Mediterranean, and in the East, had been going on for centuries.

But, for all that, the series of expeditions known as the Crusades were different, at least during the early decades, from any previous military undertakings. They were only in part military, for the number of effective fighting men was very small indeed compared

The crusading idea

Its growth

with the swarms of men and women whom religious fervor or hysteria had induced to join. The eleventh century was, above all else, a century of reform. Cluny had spread its influence far and wide; the Emperors Henry II and Henry III had made reform an important part of their State policy; the revitalized papacy, particularly under Leo IX, Alexander II, and Hildebrand, had employed the weapons of the Church vigorously, and on the whole successfully, against the married and simoniacal clergy; new forms of monastic piety had appeared in such orders as Camaldoli or Vallombrosa. This great sweep of reform influences reacted upon individual piety; there was a revived interest in church building, in the veneration of relics, and above all in pilgrimages. A pilgrimage had always been considered a "good work," the value of which was in direct ratio to the distance and difficulties of the journey. Jerusalem offered the maximum of benefits to the Western penitent and in every century men had gone to seek them. The eleventh century had recorded one hundred and seventeen of these pilgrimages, a striking increase over the number in any preceding century, and including one made by the Bishop of Bamberg with 11,000 followers. There was a new spirit in Europe which chose the Crusades as one form of expression.

Pilgrimages

The object of the Crusades

The battle of Manzikert (1071)

The fall of Jerusalem (1089)

The direct motive for the Crusades was the recovery of the Holy Land from the Moslems. Syria had been reconquered from the Saracens by the Eastern Empire in 969, but in the middle of the eleventh century the Seljuk Turks had consolidated their rule over the Bagdad caliphate and had launched an attack against the East Roman Empire. In 1071 the Turks won a victory at Manzikert which prepared the way for the conquest of Asia Minor and Syria. After Manzikert the Emperor Michael VII sent an appeal for Western support to Hildebrand, who heard it with favor as providing an opportunity for extending the papal authority, but his troubles with Henry IV, however, prevented him from taking any definite action. Upon the fall of Jerusalem, the Eastern Emperor (Alexius I) appealed in his turn to the West, and it was in answer to this appeal that the First Crusade was dispatched.

The Eastern ambassadors had appeared before Pope Urban II at the Council of Piacenza (1094). It was decided to hold a special council upon this matter early in the following year at Clermont. The intervening months were spent in vigorous propaganda which resulted in an overcrowded meeting when the council opened (November, 1095). There Urban II made one of the most effective

speeches in history. With consummate tact he appealed to every human motive: he represented the dangers that faced the Eastern Empire; he aroused indignation as he described the desecration of the holy places and a spirit of revenge as he employed the never-failing cry of "atrocities"; he held before their eyes a vision of opportunities awaiting the Crusader in a land of milk and honey; he guaranteed success by the assurance that Christ himself would lead them; he promised all participants complete remission of their sins, a moratorium on their present debts, and protection of their properties and families while they were absent.

*The Council
of Clermont
(1095)*

The multitude heard and responded with the shout, "*Deus vult!*" (It is the will of God). The date of departure was set for August 15, 1096. In the meantime Europe was canvassed by preachers and pamphlets; the "atrocities" grew worse and the promises more embracing in the hands of the irresponsible but enthusiastic. The most effective of these propagandists was Peter the Hermit, who was responsible for much of the popular fervor of the First Crusade.

*Peter the
Hermit*

Long before the appointed date, motley and pathetic bands, impatient of delay, had set out for the unknown East. Two of these, one led by Peter the Hermit and the other by a French knight, Walter the Penniless, maintained some appearance of discipline until they reached Constantinople. Here they were not particularly welcome, for they were negligible as a fighting force and were without other resources of support than begging or stealing. Alexius was glad to provide transportation to Asia Minor where a pile of white bones was to remain as a monument of failure. Other bands were lost or destroyed before Constantinople could be reached.

The real Crusade got under way during the summer and autumn of 1096. There was neither unity of command nor unity of procedure. Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin of Flanders led their followers through Hungary and Bulgaria to Constantinople; Raymond of Toulouse, the papal legate Adhemar of Puy, and the knights from southern France marched through northern Italy, skirted the Adriatic, and crossed Greece; Robert of Normandy, Bohemond, and Tancred of Sicily sailed from Italy to Greece. Alexius was made uneasy by the conduct of the Crusaders and became suspicious of their sincerity of purpose and jealous of their strength. But he provided transportation across the Hellespont, and in the early summer of 1097 the Crusaders went into action before the town of Nicæa. The town was unable to withstand

*The first
Crusade*

*Capture of
Nicæa*

the valor of the "Franks" (as the Crusaders were indiscriminately called), but the fruits of victory were denied them by the diplomacy of Alexius, who negotiated for the surrender of Nicæa to his forces alone.

*The battle of
Dorylaeum*

On July 4 the Crusaders met and were fortunate to defeat a strong opposing force at Dorylaeum. Then for a year they struggled against hunger, thirst, sickness, heat, and cold in the long march across Asia Minor. The draught animals died and men deserted. As they approached Syria Baldwin of Flanders detached himself from the main body and proceeded to win for himself the city of Edessa. The year 1098 was well advanced before the Crusaders arrived before the walls of Antioch. Valor and bribery overcame the resistance of the defenders, and the Christians entered the city and gave themselves up, rather unwisely, to a celebration of their first victory in the Holy Land. Unwisely, because they neglected to take the most elementary precautions; and before they realized it a strong Turkish force under Kerbogha appeared before the walls. The erstwhile victors were caught as in a trap, while the carefree indulgences of the celebration period had caused a serious depletion in the food supply.

*Capture of
Antioch*

The situation of the besieged Crusaders was desperate; hundreds sought safety in flight, among them no less a one than the wealthy Stephen of Blois. A relieving force sent by Alexius estimated the Turkish strength and discreetly withdrew. Nothing short of a miracle could save the situation, and nothing short of a miracle did. In the blackest hour of despair a monk, Peter by name, had a vision which revealed the location of the lance which had pierced the Savior's side. The leaders heard his story with mixed feelings; some refused to believe it at all, some were sceptical, some were gullible, and some were tactful. The situation was too desperate to jeopardize what little there was of hope by the insistence upon private judgment. The monk led the leaders to the indicated spot and with his own hands produced the lance. A satisfactory recourse to the "Ordeal by Fire" confirmed the wavering and raised the enthusiasm of the besieged to limits unrestrainable. The gates of Antioch were suddenly thrown open and, with the Invincible Talisman borne before them, the Crusaders fell upon the besiegers. The unexpectedness or vigor of the assault demoralized the Turks and resistance gave way to flight and battle to rout.

*The Holy
lance*

Bohemond's bribery had brought about the surrender of Antioch

to the Crusaders, and Bohemond now claimed the city for his own. But the recovery of Jerusalem had been the main object of the Crusade and this object still remained to be accomplished. The Crusaders started off once again — a sadly depleted band; Baldwin was at Edessa, Bohemond was remaining at Antioch, and Stephen had joined the “rope-dancers,” as those who had let themselves over the walls during the siege were contemptuously and justly called. In June, 1099, the First Crusade reached Jerusalem and paraded about the walls in the extravagant hope that the defenses might, in the manner of Jericho, come crashing down at the sound of Christian trumpets. Reduced to more orthodox methods, the Crusaders attacked the city with a persistency and a valor that proved irresistible. Jerusalem capitulated on July 15, 1099; the Crusaders entered the city and crowned their long adventure by a wanton slaughter of the now defenseless inhabitants: “at the Holy Sepulchre our horses stood in blood to the fetlock.”

With the capture of Jerusalem the real success of the Crusades comes to an end. Whatever may have been the strength of pure religious fervor behind this first effort, it was greater than that in any other, and the subsequent history of the Crusades centers in the political absurdities of the kingdom of Jerusalem and the commercial rivalries of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. To Godfrey of Bouillon fell the honor of being elected the head of the new conquests, with the title of “Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.”

The position of the official ruler of the kingdom of Jerusalem was not a strong one, either in territorial extent or in the enjoyment of power. Technically the kingdom was some five hundred miles in length and some parts of it were perhaps fifty miles in width, but a considerable area escaped the jurisdiction of the king. The county of Edessa, the county of Tripoli, and the principality of Antioch were so independent in fact that the kingdom of Jerusalem was virtually limited to the cities of Jerusalem, Tyre, and Acre, and the four baronies of Galilee, Sidon, Kerak-Montreal, and Jaffa-Ascalon.

The problems which faced the Crusaders in Syria were complicated ones. Nothing was helpfully familiar; language, food, costumes, customs were all as strange as the climate and the scenery. The population with its Greeks (Christian and Moslem), Jews, Arabs, Egyptians, and Turks was more patently heterogeneous than in the West. Most disturbing must have been the absence of feudalism, the *sine qua non* of the Frank. But feudalism could hardly

The crusading army breaks up

Capture of Jerusalem (1099)

The kingdom of Jerusalem

Problems



be wished upon the Syrians, and to force it upon them would have aroused a dangerous enmity and lost a coöperation which the Franks could not ignore. So the Crusaders made a virtue of necessity and allowed the natives a measure of independence which would have shocked the conservatives at home.

But the Franks were not prepared to abandon feudalism altogether; they organized their relationship with each other on that familiar model and embodied it in an instrument later known as the "Assize of Jerusalem." As in the West the prime obligation was military service, but not for any conventional period of forty days; when the crusading knight was summoned he was expected to appear ready to serve a full year if need be. In the matter of justice the Assize was very fair and undoubtedly reflects the influence of the Italian merchants. At the top of the judicial structure was the High Court of Jerusalem; then (omitting the usual baronial courts) there were the court of Burgesses (with branches in each of the important fiefs), a court called the *Fonde* for the trial of commercial cases, the *Chaine* for the administration of maritime law, and the *Reis* for litigation between natives.

Military activities occupied a great deal of the Crusaders' time, for the kingdom of Jerusalem was never secure, threatened as it was from the southwest, the east, and the northeast. A first-rate military efficiency was required together with a sound defensive program. Neither was realized. Man for man the Frank was more than a match for his Paynim foe; but he was scornful of discipline, innocent of strategy, and surprisingly indifferent to precautionary measures of the most obvious kind. No definite attempt was made to attain or construct a defensible frontier, and no thorough expulsion of hostile Saracens even within the kingdom was undertaken. "The possession of Jerusalem was . . . the engrossing interest and the systematic conquest which would have secured that position was neglected in favour of holding isolated posts without proper lines of communication."¹ Even in battle the Crusaders paid no attention to the suitability of position and refused to recognize the value of infantry, despite the fact that every important victory was due to an alliance of the mounted warriors *with* the infantry, who could stand firm while the horsemen rallied after a charge or a forced retreat.

Many causes conspired to bring about this state of things. Mili-

Organization

The "Assize of Jerusalem"

Courts

Military carelessness

¹ *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, p. 791.

*Demands of
the Italian
towns*

tant feudalism was ever conspicuous for personal bravery and collective incompetence; the crusading armies were not composed exclusively of the flower of Europe but were heterogeneous multitudes led by jealous leaders; the great commercial cities of Italy, without whose aid the Crusades had been impossible, were anxious that the seaports be held and that communication between East and West should remain open; the number of effective fighting men on permanent service was comparatively small. Most of those who reached Syria with one or another of the crusading bands soon returned to Europe. That the Franks held Jerusalem for ninety years and their last stronghold (Acre) until 1291 was due to the political disunion of the Moslems and not to the military efficiency of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

*The Military
Orders*

At one time, however, it seemed as though the Crusaders had produced a fighting machine of excellent value in the Military Orders. Early in the twelfth century (c. 1118) Hugh de Paens and a few companions conceived the idea of establishing an order for the convoy and protection of pilgrims through the kingdom to Jerusalem. As a general headquarters they were given a part of the royal residence in Solomon's Temple, from which they took the name of Templars. A few years later Raymond of Puy, who had revived the work of the hospital of St John (founded in the early eleventh century by the merchants of Amalfi), enlarged the scope of his labors and reorganized along the lines of the Templars. The two Orders grew with amazing rapidity and received the approval of the papacy.

Templars

*Hospitallers
(Knights of
St John)*

Organization

Popularity

Following the familiar precedent of the Monastic Orders, the Templars and the Hospitallers took the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and when not engaged in fighting they lived in accordance with the rule governing the Canons Regular and merited the rare designation — “lions in war and lambs in the house.” Both Orders were divided into three classes: the knights, whose main occupation was fighting and who must be of noble rank; the squires, who looked after the military needs of the knights and were sometimes called into service; and the chaplains, who attended to the spiritual exercises of the Order. Both Orders were distinguished by special insignia: the Templars by a white cross on a black field; the Hospitallers by the red cross on a white field which has become so familiar. The Military Orders fired the enthusiasm of the people; St Bernard gave them his invaluable approval; those

who could not, or would not, make the journey to the Holy Land compensated by making a gift to one or the other Order. "Enormous estates accrued to them in every country in Europe, and their houses in the West became recruiting stations, whence a regular supply of knights and servitors, vowed to a perpetual crusade, kept alive the forces of the Latin Kingdom." Their wealth was further increased by a general exemption from taxation. But wealth brought decay, the Orders became jealous of each other, and rivalry ripened into hostility so that their combined military strength was seldom available.

For the most part the Franks managed pretty well. They adjusted themselves rapidly to the new conditions. They came to enjoy the subtle luxuries of the East, the silks, the spices, the food, and the houses with their "cooled courts and running water." They experienced the strange satisfaction of tolerance, for they had come to appreciate and respect the civilization and scientific superiority of their Moslem neighbors. Christ, Mahomet, and Jehovah were often worshiped under a single roof. "We who were Westerns are now Easterns, we have forgotten our native land." There was a constant stream of Christians into Syria—"God has poured the West into the East"—but many of them were such as the East could have done very well without; adventurers, soldiers of fortune, ne'er-do-wells, men who should have been in prison or had been released on the promise to go crusading, bankrupts, defaulters, loafers, beggars, confidence men, the very riffraff and scum of Europe.

The real thriving portion of the kingdom consisted of the seaport towns, which became very prosperous under the commercial genius of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice. These three cities rendered indispensable service in transporting reënforcements, remounts, and supplies to the Crusaders. In return they sought a share of the lucrative Oriental trade. Hence in every seaport town which fell to the Franks, one or more of the three sought and obtained a quarter of the city for its exclusive commercial use. Here it established its merchants, its magistrates, and its *fondaco* (the "factory" of the later trading companies), or trading post. And no wonder! For "Syrian agriculture produced olives, wine, sugar, dates, figs. The cedars of Lebanon furnished valuable timber. The textiles of Syria in wool and silk were highly prized. Raw silk was produced at Antioch, Tripoli, Tortosa; the brocades of Antioch, the glassware and metal ware of Tyre, lamps, cups, basins, pottery, enamel work, were

Wealth

The West becomes East

Economic prosperity

famous; cloth of gold and tapestry were made at Acre; dye works abounded at Tripoli, Latakia, Sagetta, Hebron and Jerusalem; Tyre was a centre of sugar manufacture. In the alluvial plain of the lowest course of the Jordan, where the heat is almost tropical, one may still see the ruins of the Crusaders' sugar mills now overgrown with jungle. Soap was made at Antioch, Tortosa and Acre; cordials, fruit syrups, were common everywhere; Jerusalem had a brewery for the manufacture of the beer called *cervoise*; salt was refined along the shore of the Dead Sea."²

Imad-ed-din

The characteristic disunion of the Moslem tribes was ended with the appearance of the efficient Imad-ed-din Zangi, who shocked the complacency of the Crusaders by his attack upon and capture of the city of Edessa (1144). The news of this disaster inspired St Bernard to preach the Second Crusade, and he succeeded in winning over King Louis VII of France and the Emperor Conrad III of Germany. The Crusade got under way in 1147, but it was one unrelieved disaster and ended in the fiasco of the siege of Damascus, where jealousy and treason effectually ruined what hopes of success the Crusaders had. The Moslem power kept increasing; Egypt, which had long been jealous of the caliphate of Bagdad, was overrun and brought to submission by Saladin.

Saladin

Islam had found a chieftain and a hero in this great leader, whose nobility of character compares favorably with the best of his Christian enemies. With Egypt under control, Saladin could now attack the kingdom of Jerusalem from the east and south. His hand was stayed, however, by a truce made with the Count of Tripoli. Unfortunately for the Christians, this truce was broken by Reginald of Châtillon, who was in command of

Reginald of Châtillon, the truce breaker

the great fortress of Kerak. A passing caravan proved too great a temptation; Reginald fell upon it, despoiled it, won a paltry treasure, and ruined a kingdom. Saladin at once proceeded to attack the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Crusaders showed their customary valor and perhaps more than their usual lack of discretion. Choosing an impossible battleground and heedless of the exhausted state of their

The battle of Hattin

foot soldiers, the Crusaders engaged Saladin at the battle of Hattin. The result was the complete overthrow of the Christian forces. Saladin then overran the kingdom, capturing many places almost without effort, and entered Jerusalem (1187). He celebrated his triumph by the liberation of all Christians that they might have occasion "to praise the goodness of our religion."

² Thompson, J. W., *Economic and Social History*, p. 405.

Fall of Jerusalem (1187)

Once more Europe heard with dismay that Jerusalem had fallen to the infidels, and once more it made an effort (and the last real effort) to recover it. The prospect of success seemed bright indeed, for the three most prominent men in Europe took the Cross: Frederick Barbarossa the martial Emperor of Germany, the strategist Philip Augustus of France, and that incomparable fighter, Richard Lion-heart of England. But the Third Crusade, if more dramatic in incident, was but slightly more successful than the Second. Frederick was drowned in the river Chalycadnus, and his followers either returned to Germany disheartened or struggled on to join the forces besieging Acre. Philip and Richard were too unlike in character to be friendly, and the fact that the King of England was the vassal of the King of France for the duchy of Normandy did little to make matters more amicable. Nor, indeed, is there evidence that either tried to maintain a friendship which neither felt. Richard was selfish, irresponsible, but glorious; Philip was proud, suspicious, and jealous; their alliance was weakness rather than strength. Philip proceeded to Acre to join the siege, while Richard amused himself with the conquest of Cyprus and the winning of a queen (incidentally jilting Philip's sister, to whom he had been long betrothed) before appearing before the walls that seven centuries later were to end Napoleon's dreams of an Eastern Empire.

The siege of Acre lasted until July, 1191, when it was surrendered to the Christians, but the glory of the victory was clouded by the execution of some twenty-seven hundred captives because a stipulated ransom had not been paid on time. Philip returned home to plot with John of England against the absent Richard. Richard remained fighting rather aimlessly, but performing such prodigies of valor that his name became a terror to the Saracens and was used by Saracen mothers as a sedative. To tell a howling young Moslem that "Lion-heart would get him if he didn't watch out" was generally sufficient (or should have been) to reduce him to a terrified silence. In 1192 Richard succeeded in negotiating a truce with Saladin, by which the port of Jaffa was given to the Christians and pilgrims were permitted to enter and leave Jerusalem without let or hindrance. With Richard's departure from the Holy Land (he had wept at his failure and had refused to look upon the Jerusalem he could not rescue) departed the great period of the Crusades.

*Siege of Acre**Richard
Lion-heart*

In 1204 a Crusade which had chosen Egypt as its first objective was astutely turned by the Venetians, envious of the commercial

The Fourth Crusade

against Constantinople

Later Crusades

The evil results of the Crusades

Loss of life

Expense

greatness of Constantinople, against the capital of the Eastern Empire. This Crusade was, most unfortunately, but too successful, for in the capture and loot of Constantinople manuscripts and works of art of inestimable value were lost or destroyed by the uninterested Crusaders. From 1204 to 1261 a Latin Empire of Constantinople existed, but in a chronic "state of childhood and caducity." In 1212 occurred the pathetic Children's Crusade, which reflects no credit upon those who allowed it to organize and still less upon the merchants of Marseilles, who sold the children into slavery—to the Saracens at that! Other Crusades took place in 1216 (against Palestine), 1218 (Egypt), 1228 (Frederick II's "excommunicated" Crusade to Palestine), 1239 (Egypt), 1240 (Palestine), 1243 (Palestine), 1248 (St Louis' quixotic effort in Egypt), 1270 (St Louis' last Crusade against Tunis), and 1271 (Edward Plantagenet in Palestine). In 1291 the Mongols, who had succeeded in dominating the East Moslem Empire since their capture of Bagdad (1258), destroyed all hopes of further crusading efforts when they captured Acre, the last remaining bit of Christian ground in Syria.

Abortive as the Crusades were in accomplishing their proposed object, the two centuries of direct contact with the East and its civilization were not without effect upon the West. Europe both benefited and suffered from the "Eastern diversion." The evils were fortunately outnumbered by the good, but there was evil enough. To begin with there was a tremendous loss of life and a constant drain upon the man power of the West for over six generations. The number of men slain in actual combat with the Saracens was only a fraction of the total who lost their lives through hunger, sickness, or accumulated hardship. A ruler absent indefinitely upon a Crusade was of little value to his State; only a political genius like Suger was able to control France in the absence of Louis VII, and Suger was constantly urging the king to come home and attend to the affairs of the realm; the departure of Frederick Barbarossa was followed by the return of Henry the Lion to Germany; the absence of Richard Lion-heart nearly produced a revolution in England, and the Crusade of Frederick II gave the papacy the opportunity to attack his southern dominions.

Furthermore, royal Crusades were expensive. The cost of St Louis' Crusade in Egypt, which resulted in his capture at Mansourah, is appalling even to an age which treats of war debts grandiloquently; his personal expenses reached the regal amount of \$35,000,000, while

the estimated cost to France was approximately double that amount; the ransom of the captives after Mansourah required \$400,000,-000! The ransom of Richard Lion-heart (indirectly due to his Crusade) caused England no end of embarrassment.

Much has been made of the moral degeneration brought about by the contact with the luxurious sensuality or sensual luxuriousness of the East, but while it may be admitted that the permanent residents in Syria were probably so affected and that the *pullani* (children of Franks and Syrians) were less worthy than their fathers, it would be difficult to prove a definite deterioration in European morals as a result of the Crusades.

It is true, however, that the Crusades hastened the fall of Constantinople as a result of the unfortunate expedition of 1204 and the half century of mock empire that succeeded it. Again, enthusiastic piety showered gifts upon religious foundations of every kind and so vitiated that healthy spirit of monastic reform which had appeared so promising in the twelfth century. The part which the Popes had played in urging the undertaking of Crusades and the privileges which they, without consultation, promised all participants encouraged extravagant claims of authority and a misuse of the crusading idea. The sword came to be regarded as a natural arbiter in all disputes in which the Church was involved. Did the Church disapprove of the tenets set forth by the Christian Albigenses, then it declared a Crusade against them and paid its Crusaders liberally with privileges. The Teutonic Order, formed by a group of Germans to care for the sick and wounded during the siege of Acre, was given the privileges of a permanent Crusade against the Slavs on the eastern frontier of Germany, while the "Crusade of the Keys" was ordered by the papacy (with privileges) against the Crusader Frederick II. Had the privileges been limited to strictly spiritual ones the effect would have undoubtedly been bad, but when extended to embrace purely temporal ones the result was chaos. The immunity from prosecution by the courts of the man who had taken the Cross was an arbitrary interference with civil jurisprudence, while the suspension of his debts until the fulfillment of his crusading vow was an obvious injustice to the creditor and a joy forever to the unscrupulous.

On the other hand, the Crusades directly furthered Western civilization or stimulated movements which were making for better conditions. In the first place, they shook Europe out of a self-

Monastic decline

Political use of "Crusades"

Abuses

Benefits

Tolerance

satisfied complacency, a provincialism which is the most irritating enemy of progress. "He knows not England, who only England knows," and the remark is truer of medieval England than modern. Men were contemptuous of the Saracen because they did not know him; when they did meet him they were impressed by his greater culture and humiliated by his equal humanity. They learned toleration in the East, though for the most part they left it there. Yet the contact with other ideas, other ways of doing things, other things to eat, other things to wear, other things to look at, opened up a wider horizon and one which never perceptibly narrowed again. There was a good market for guidebooks, itineraries, and medieval Baedekers which did much to dispel the mists of popular geography.

Political freedom

The heavy cost of the Crusades was indirectly a benefit. The baron, the knight, the layman sold what he could to procure the necessary funds for his expensive undertaking. When he had nothing tangible to sell he sold privileges; villeins bought emancipation from the annoying predial labor on the lord's demesne and so reached the dignity of "copy-holders," while towns purchased charters of independence from arbitrary interference in matters of purely civic interest. More money was thrown into circulation than had been seen (or suspected) for centuries, which suggests a considerable amount of hoarding during the past centuries. Politically the French monarchy was strengthened by the dying out or killing off of a large number of noble families and the consequent reversion of their lands — through the process of "escheat" — to the crown.

Commerce and trade

Commerce and all that is connected with it — industry, shipping, ships, insurance, town life, methods of business transaction — reacted undeniably to the Crusades, but "whether the Crusades created the appetite for new commodities, or the appetite stimulated the Crusades" is an unsolved problem. What is certain is that the quantity of Eastern goods imported into Europe increased immeasurably, and the carpets, ivories, perfumes, spices, silks, velvets, and drugs which had once been luxuries became essentials. Venice, Pisa, and Genoa reached unprecedented heights of prosperity, and their good fortune was shared by the towns along the Rhine and in southern France.

Comforts

The contact with Saracen culture and science offered much to the European. Byzantine architecture exerted a profound influence upon southern Germany, Venice learned much from the Syrians in the art of glassmaking, and Eastern pottery became the model for

Western workers. The Crusaders enriched their orchards with the exquisite fruits of the East and improved their arable land by the introduction of windmills and irrigation ditches. Education was improved by the introduction of algebra, spherical trigonometry, and the teaching of geography by the use of globes. There was a faintly perceptible revival in the study of Greek, but Spain contributed far more to the renewed interest in Greek literature than did the Crusades. Literary production was unquestionably stimulated, finding expression in such works as the chronicles of the Crusades, in the history of William of Tyre, and in vernacular romances and ballads.

Of a score of miscellaneous effects may be mentioned the addition of tents, drums, and lances to the soldiers' equipment and the introduction of a host of words into the European vocabulary: names for spices and special textiles, scientific words beginning conveniently with *al-*, and simple words of color which the heraldist scornfully refuses to translate — *gûles*, rose; *azure*, blue; and *sinople*, green. Finally, Christendom learned that a German must be disliked by a Frenchman and vice versa; Eudes of Deuil, who recorded the Franco-German Crusade of 1147, objected to Germans (and Greeks) on principle, while during the Third Crusade it was dangerous to allow the English and French to attack the walls of Acre at the same time, and the Teutonic Order (born during the same siege) limited its membership to Germans.

Learning

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW MONASTICISM

THE eleventh century was, above all else, a century of reform and it was the reform movement, under the able leadership of Gregory VII, which set free the religious spirit of the later Middle Ages. Characteristic of the reform program was a definite reaction against both the secularism and the formalism of the Church, a reaction which found expression in a revival of the longing for the contemplative life. The life of a hermit or anchorite, which had long ceased to attract, once again exercised its fascination over men and women who hoped to gain Heaven by losing the world. Others grouped themselves in communities and sought out deserted places where they might live a life at once eremitic and cenobitic. Thus, in the first part of the century were organized the Christian Orders of Camaldoli by St Romuald, and Vallombrosa by St Gualbert. As the century progressed and the reform movement lost its abstract character, became articulate and acquired something of a military organization, zealous enthusiasts fell into line and gave more of order and system to their foundations. In 1074 St Stephen established a new Monastic Order at Grandmont, noted for its effort to live in apostolic simplicity, its admission of women and lay brethren as *conversi*, and its aesthetic appreciation of a well-combed beard. Ten years later St Bruno of Cologne founded the more famous Order of the Carthusians at Grenoble. The new Order planned to establish a community, existing for the better worship and service of God and bestowing on the individual the advantages to be gained from solitude. Life at Grenoble was rigorous to an extreme. The monks received but one meal a day, which they ate apart in their own cells and which generally consisted of nothing more interesting than bread, cabbages, and thin wine. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays they improved themselves on bread and water. Sundays and Festival Days were distinguished by the provision of eggs and cheese. In contrast to the bearded monks of Grandmont, the Carthusians adopted the bald head. The monks were sworn to silence and assembled only to perform the offices of

*The century of
reform*

Grandmont

Carthusians

Matins, Mass, and Vespers. The rest of the time they spent in their cells and devoted to prayer, study, and the writing or copying of manuscripts. The necessary labor connected with the provision of food, clothing, and the general upkeep of the monastery was performed by the *conversi*, for the contemplative life was nobler than the active, even as Mary was more honored than Martha. Work was regarded as being valuable less for its social results than for its effect upon the individual. It was only of worth in so far as it served to keep the soul from the temptation of pride and idleness.

To the great incentives which for centuries had driven men and women to adopt the cloistered life, the desire for peace and safety and the remorse of the penitent, the close of the century brought the birth of a new piety which germinated in the favorable atmosphere of the crusading fervor which swept through Europe and centered in a devotion to the human life of Christ as a manifestation of the divine life. "The Crusaders brought back from the Holy Land and the holy places a new, or at least until now, a rare form of Christian piety, that is, an absorption in the sufferings and the *Via Dolorosa* of Christ. Asceticism, once negative, received a positive form and aim of becoming one with the Redeemer by fervent love and perfect imitation; and the great number of new Orders that were founded at this time bears witness to the general enthusiasm."¹

Camaldoli, Vallombrosa, and even Grandmont had been merely reactionary in their attempt to recapture the simplicity of the primitive Church. Devoid of imagination, they succeeded only in isolating themselves from society without greatly affecting the world at large. The Carthusians with their emphasis upon the contemplative life were more successful. But in 1098 Robert of Molesme established at Cîteaux an Order which for a time eclipsed the waning glories of Cluny. The early history of the Cistercian Order is inseparable from that of its greatest member, St Bernard.

Cîteaux

St Bernard

Clairvaux

Bernard, who was born in 1091, came from a noble Burgundian family and "imbibed his piety with his mother's milk." He entered the monastery at Cîteaux, but desirous of further seclusion and austerities he sought and obtained permission to establish a daughter-monastery at Clairvaux (1115). Of this new foundation he became the first abbot and held this office until his death in 1153. Bernard was "blonde and delicate and had withal a maidenly appearance."

¹ Harnack, A., *Essay on Monasticism*.

But this delicate body housed an inspired spirit and an iron will. He subjected himself to a self-imposed discipline that was the admiration and despair of his disciples. His ideas of simplicity approached asceticism. He put wax in his ears that his contemplations should not be disturbed by earthly sounds and was content with a bare board as his bed. He was "one of the most perfect applicers of Christianity at its best"; his sermons found speedy echo in the hearts of his audiences; his criticisms, always frank, were received with respect and acted upon with profit; his sincerity and whole-hearted earnestness captivated his followers and assured the success of the Cistercian Order. Seven hundred monks at Clairvaux and one hundred and sixty-three abbeys testify to the popularity and reputation of this great abbot.

But Bernard was no mere monk passing his life in splendid isolation. He had a talent for business and a power of persuasion which caused him to be sought out and appealed to in times of need or in questions difficult of solution. It was his interference in the papal schism of 1130 which turned the scales in favor of Innocent II; twice he influenced the Emperor Lothar to invade Italy, and he preached the Second Crusade with unfortunate success. Now in the courts of kings and now in the cloister he passed "backwards and forwards between earth and heaven with the rapidity of the angels in Jacob's dream." There was something of the contradictory in his character. He, the greatest preacher of the twelfth century, preached against preaching; he who could journey to Italy and be unconscious of the glories of an Alpine sunrise and the splendors of the Lombard lakes was a true lover of nature: "the little he knew he learned under the beeches and oaks of the forest"; "you will find something far greater in the woods than you will in books. Stones and trees will teach you what you will never learn from masters." This was at least true of his own case, for Bernard had no talent for philosophy or abstract speculation, and his victory over Abelard at the Council of Soissons was due rather to his reputation than his dialectic.

Four years after Bernard had established his monastery at Clairvaux, Stephen Harding, an Englishman, then abbot of the mother-house at Grenoble, gave the Cistercian Order a constitution in a document known as the *Carta Caritatis*. The Order was centralized about Cîteaux; the Abbot of Cîteaux was the "Father of the Uni-

Activity

The "Charter of Charity"

versal Order" and the abbots of the daughter-houses were obliged to repair to Cîteaux on Holy Cross Day to take counsel for the Order, but the daughter-houses were permitted a certain autonomy under a freely elected abbot, and the rights of visitation by the Abbot of Cîteaux or his agents were restricted. On the other hand, Cîteaux itself was subject to visitation by four "prime abbots" chosen from the general body of the Order.

Discipline within the Cistercian Order was strict but, on the whole, milder than that of the Carthusians. From springtime to autumn the monks enjoyed two meals a day, consisting of beans, lentils, and peas, or milk, cheese, and eggs, the whole flavored with salt or oil. On rare occasions fish and fowl amplified the menu. From September to Easter only one meal a day was permitted. The amount of clothing varied with the climate but nominally consisted of a long white robe (and cowl) for house wear and an armless knee-length smock of coarse and dark material for labor. The wearers and their clothes washed or were washed as rarely as possible. The Cistercians made great use of *conversi* for the rougher labor. For the rest, the Cistercians followed the normal monastic routine of work, reading, and prayer, but they carried their simplicity into their architecture: they disapproved of the deep-toned and highly ornamented bells which were the delight of the Middle Ages and are no small part of the charm of modern Europe; so that the Cistercian monastery was severe in outline with no bell towers and no

" storied windows richly dight."

The religious enthusiasm which had stimulated the establishment of these foundations produced many others as well. Laymen formed themselves into simple societies for the relief of the poor and the sick, for the ransom of captives, and for the protection and harboring of travelers. The *Humiliati* were recruited from those engaged in the woolen trade and dedicated themselves to the pursuit of a pure Christian life; the *Beguines* of Flanders did valuable and needful work in the service of charity. At the turn of the eleventh century Robert of Arbrissel established a joint community for men and women at Fontevrault. The women were divided into three classes: widows, penitents, and those who desired (and were eligible) to take the normal vows. This example was followed in England by Gilbert of Sempringham. The movement embraced the canons of the cathedral churches. Some, the Augustine canons, organized themselves

in accordance with the suggestions given by St Augustine to his sister; others joined the Order established by Norbert.

Norbert of Xanten (later of Premontré) was a man who had substituted a life of penance for a career of self-indulgence. He had wandered through north Germany and France as a pilgrim and evangelist, for he "would seek God with bare feet." Later, supported by the Emperor, he became Archbishop of Magdeburg and greatly furthered the work of conversion along the eastern frontier. But his greatest work was in connection with the reform of the loose system in which the canons lived. The canons had gradually come to live apart from the chapter-house and met (for other than purely religious services) only on Festal Days or perhaps for a drink in the evening. His followers, who called themselves the "Poor men of Christ," adopted the white robe and the principles of the *Carta Caritatis* of the Cistercians. The reform of the canonical life met with general approval, and it was not long before the bulk of the canons in Europe had affiliated themselves with either the Augustines or the Premonstratensians.

Norbert of Xanten

But:

"Non tonsura facit monachum, nec horrida vestis,
Sed virtus animi, perpetuusque vigor."²

and, it must be admitted, the practice often fell behind the Rule. Monastic life in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries differed considerably from that in the Benedictine foundations of the seventh and eighth. This change was due to a variety of causes. In the early monasteries the presence of a monk who had taken orders was rare and discouraged, in the later ones the priest-monk was very frequently to be found. Again, the introduction of the lay brethren or *conversi*, to whom was intrusted the hard manual labor, released the monks from the necessity of working in the fields and gave them at once leisure for prayer and study and temptation to idleness or worse. The expanding commerce with the East, the increasing economic wealth, the development in architecture and the art of building, in short, the presence of luxuries and the means of acquiring them, could not leave the monasteries untouched. The altars

Monastic life

Relaxed severity

² "The tonsure does not make the monk, nor horrid clothes,
But strength of soul, and ceaseless watchfulness."

displayed the gorgeous conceits of foreign goldsmiths, and the tapestry walls reflected the splendid colors of the Orient. As always, the monasteries provided a convenient repository for the younger sons of feudal lords, an unwholesome condition which resulted in a feeling of class distinction unfavorable to the monastic ideal.

Generalities, of course, are always dangerous and particularly so in dealing with monastic life. In the chronicles the evil that monks did lives after them more than the good, but that is a wholesome sign, for it was the unusual that found its way into the monastic pages. Records have come down from countless monasteries, showing considerable variation in the details and minutiae of food, clothing, and daily observance. It is perhaps possible, however, to give a general picture of monastic life without too great a breach of the canons of accuracy.

The main object of monastic life being the praise and worship of God, the eight original offices from Matins to Compline remained unaltered, although individual abbeys sometimes added special services of their own. Despite the inevitable variations, most monasteries conformed to a ground plan which may be taken as a standard. The buildings were enclosed by a high wall. "When the position of the church permitted, the buildings of the monastery lay to the south, so as to get the sun and to have the protection of the church from the north wind; but if space was not available on that side they would be placed on the north. In any case, they were grouped round an open court, the 'cloister garth,' surrounded by a covered walk known as the cloisters." The cloisters were so much used that "cloister" came to be a synonym for monastery. Here the monks walked in their hours of leisure, alone in silent meditation or in pairs conversing in hushed tones or by signs; here they rested and sunned themselves on the broad stone bench that ran along the inner wall, and here, when weather permitted, the scribe or chronicler labored at his manuscript. "The east side of the cloister contained the transept of the church, the chapter-house, in which most of the business of the monastery was transacted, and usually the parlor, a room in which the monks were allowed to meet at certain times for conversation or to receive visitors. Over the chapter-house and parlor was the dormitory or common sleeping-room; this led at one end into the church by a flight of steps in the transept, and at the other end into the rere-dorter or latrines. The west cloister consisted of a range of cellars on the ground floor, with rooms above them

usually set apart for the reception of guests, as the monastery was often the hotel of the mediaeval traveler.”³

The popularity of the monasteries in the twelfth century had brought such an increase in membership that the few offices which had sufficed in earlier days were no longer adequate. New officials appeared until the list of them is of a respectable length. Omitting the abbot, the prior, and subprior, there was a *sacristan* who was in charge of the Communion bread and wine and the wax lights for the church; who inspected and supervised the repair of the glass windows and the leaden roofs, saw that the bells were sound and the bell ropes were safe, superintended the scrubbing and washing out of the church, and kept the keys of the many shrines. The *chamberlain* was in charge of the monastery wardrobe; provided the linsey-wolsey used for the making of shirts and sheets, inspected the tailors at their work, was responsible for the condition of the dormitory and its linen, and issued new shoes and gowns at discretion. The *cellarer* held a position of great responsibility and some temptation; under his management were the granaries and the wine cellar; it was his task to control the supply of flour for the bakehouse, of malt for the brewery, of meat for the kitchen, of cheese, wine, and beer for the refectory, of hay for the stables, and of wood for the ovens. Other officials included the *hospitarius* (hostler) who attended to the wants of pilgrims and strangers; the *almoner* who gave the bits of broken bread and meat to the poor and hungry who crowded at the gate; the prior’s chaplain who was also the prior’s private steward; the barber who had time enough to add the duties of undertaker and gravedigger to his somewhat more pleasant vocation; the *tumbary* who kept the tombs in a state of decency and repair; the *precentor* or chanter who directed the church services, taught singing, looked after the music and the organ, and sometimes functioned as librarian and secretary, although these duties were often assumed by the *scolasticus* who was in charge of the school; the *infirmarius* in charge of the infirmary and its inmates; and last but not least the *coquinarius* or cook.

The increased membership was not limited to those cloistered within the walls, for the *conversi* had to be cared for as well as managed. “Under the Cross is good living” ran a medieval proverb, and, realizing the additional protection afforded by the Church, laymen had flocked to enter the ranks of this new class. So nu-

Monastic officials

³ Salzman, L. F., *English Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 124-125.

Conversi

merous, indeed, did they become that in many places they far outnumbered the monks, and in some they became sufficiently powerful to control the monastic policy. They differed from the earlier vassals and serfs in that they were freemen and had pledged themselves to a semireligious life. They were expected to attend Mass on Sundays and Festal Days or to repeat fifty *Paternosters* in default; a smaller number sufficed for the less important offices. Little attention was paid to their religious knowledge: it was enough if they knew the *Paternoster*, the *Credo*, the *Miserere*, and the *Benedicite*. Indeed, they were not only not taught to read, but if by any chance they could read before becoming *conversi* they were forbidden to employ that talent. Theoretically, they were expected to drink water instead of wine, nor were they given cheese, eggs, or fish. Their clothes, black or gray, were of the simplest, and they were the indignant recipients of the monks' last year's shoes. Their beds were hard and provided with a covering of hides, while the monks regaled in wool. From Easter until September they could sleep until daybreak, a favor bestowed upon them because they received no lunch during this period; for the rest of the year (when lunch was provided) they rose at three in the morning. They wore their hair long and affected beards.

The monasteries rapidly increased in number and in wealth. *The Orders grow wealthy* Grants of land by earnest or troubled consciences created an appetite for more, and monks received the unpleasant designation of "land-grabbers." "Evil neighbours like the white monks" was a common English simile. There was much truth behind the complaints of men who accused the monasteries of getting land by fair means or foul and of stretching a point in making a survey. On the other hand, the great bulk of monastic land had been honestly obtained by grant or by the sterner method of conquest from forest and swamp. Land acquired by such varied means would rarely be contiguous, and estates (called by the Cistercians "granges") were scattered over the countryside. Europe benefited materially from this extensive accumulation of land by the monasteries, for if monastic agricultural methods were conservative and based upon the classic treatises of Varro and Columella, yet forests and swamps were cleared and drained and the rough places made plain. The Cistercians were particularly active in the breeding and care of sheep and contributed greatly to the growing woollen industry.

If the monasteries were anxious to increase their acreage so

were the nobles; and abbot and lord often clashed over doubtful territory. To meet the noble with his own weapons it had long been the custom for the abbot to appoint a *vogt* or advocate to deal with such problems as arose through the monastery's contact with the feudalism. For this service the *vogt* received lands and a definite percentage of the revenues collected from vassals and tenants. But the *vogt* could (and often did) become an embarrassment, and abbots came to appoint dukes, kings, and even emperors as their *vögte*, assuming with a somewhat illogical optimism that their exalted position would render them less subject to avarice.

From the return of the fields, from the breeding of sheep and swine, from the sale of the surplus wool and meat and the yield of the vineyards, most monasteries were self-supporting and many were prosperous. With prosperity came a breaking down of the early simplicity and a laxity in discipline. The monks became infected with a social complex and strove to erect a barrier between themselves and their *conversi* and to remove any which might exist between them and the feudal families. Admission to the Orders became harder and harder for men of humble birth, the abbots were men of lineage, and one gathers from the myriad tales of visions and miracles that the saints and angels preferred to bestow the favor of their help and appearance upon men whose families boasted a coat of arms. The beds became softer and attendance at Matins irregular and incomplete. Mattresses and feather beds waged a stubborn and successful war against the scorn and threatenings of outraged reformers. The food improved in quantity and variety; Cluny acquired a reputation in the culinary art by its ingenious and varied preparation of dishes which conformed to the letter though hardly to the spirit of the Rule. In an explanation of the sign manual used at Hirschau (so as not to break the rule of silence), there is a catalogue of fish, fowl, and fruit which would extort approbation from an epicure. Even the clothing by subtle changes approached the layman's in richness of material, style, and comfort. The rule which confined the monks to the cloisters was evaded in a dozen ways or ignored altogether. "They come and go as they please" is an often repeated complaint of the official "visitor," and monks used the excuse of "pilgrimage" to procure a leave of absence.

Laxity in detail carried with it a general laxity. The worship of God, which provided the very *raison d'être* of monasticism, suffered

The vogt

General laxity

in consequence. The offices were ill-attended and the services performed with a haste which made reverence difficult if not impossible. So common was this that a new character, *Titivillus*, was added to the already overcrowded medieval demonology. This little devil had the Herculean task of collecting all the syllables which the erring monks slurred over or dropped altogether in their singing. Again and again one hears of monks who slept and snored during the divine service, or of others who amused themselves with questionable if interesting stories, or by dropping the hot wax from candle ends upon the heads of the sleepers. If many entered the Orders, many deserted by reason of the monotony, the restrictions, or the realization of their unfitness for such a life. Many of those who remained fell into a state of lethargy or, what was worse, despair. "Despair and presumption," warned a medieval preacher, "are the devil's tristes (ambushes), where the unhappy beast seldom escapeth."

The picture is not a happy one, but writers of romance have little if any justification for their use of monks for "any iniquity which needs a sure hand and a pitiless heart." The beloved paraphernalia of "masks, daggers, and poisoned goblets, the corridors of gloomy houses and secret passages, the malevolent spectres" are as interesting and unreal as the Jabberwock. The great difficulty is that the good and sincere and wholesome side of monastic life does not bulk large in the chronicles, because it was the usual and the normal and was taken for granted by the contemporary reader. Every monk who wrote was not (even in intention) writing history; many were criticizing with the license of the satirist and the temperament of a Jeremiah; others hoped to shock their errant brethren out of their laxity or indifference. For the sincere and earnest man the monastery provided such things as he wanted; for the scholar it offered almost the only opportunity.

Monastic libraries varied beyond the possibility of generalization. The two monasteries of Christ Church and St Augustine at Canterbury contained three thousand manuscripts, not including some hundreds of service books. Among these were five copies of Priscian's *Grammar*, nine of Cicero's *Rhetorica*, eleven copies of Macrobius, fifteen of Martianus Capella, seven of Boethius, five of Terence, eight of Virgil, eight of Horace, five of Lucan, four of Juvenal, five of Ovid, and some one hundred and ninety-two miscellaneous works on medicine. On the other hand, in the great diocese of Rouen, the

archbishop found the libraries in an appalling condition; the books were pitifully few in number, many had been lost, others had been borrowed, which is much the same thing, some had been sold to meet current expenses or to send the abbot's nephew to school in Paris; even the essential service books were inadequate, and, strangest thing of all, in many monasteries the archbishop could find no one qualified to make copies. But when all things are considered, the monasteries deserved the popularity they enjoyed and the respect which they received, and Europe was a better place for their existence.

The problem of the nunneries is more difficult than that of the monastic foundations. They were never popular with the Church, which made sporadic but futile efforts to discourage them. Further, they left few records behind them, so that such information as exists comes from the stylus of the scornful monk or the unsympathetic and probably disapproving "visitor." The rules governing nunneries were modeled upon Benedictine or Augustinian models, although of less severity. For conducting the required offices they needed the services of a priest, Mass readers, and helpers, and a father confessor was generally in residence. In the larger foundations the abbesses also employed male clerks as secretaries and sometimes appointed a local noble to act as chamberlain. The nunnery, as the monastery, was represented in the "world" by the *vogt*.

Life in the nunnery was neither arduous nor necessarily monotonous. The novitiate were taught to sing and so much of letters as was essential for their devotions. The choice of work for the nuns was sufficiently varied; they could engage in the manufacture and embroidery of church vestments and altar cloths, an occupation which provided generous scope for individual genius; those less skillful with the needle might turn out the "blod-bendes" used for bandaging after the bleeding which formed the "be all and end all" of medieval hygiene; they might mend poor people's clothes and care for travelers and the sick; they might potter about the garden, orchard, or vineyard or engage in the heavier but not exacting work in the hayfields.

Nunneries, in general, ran along less smoothly than the monasteries. The infractions of the "Rule" were less serious but of a nature which made it hard to maintain a strict discipline. There was the same restlessness as in the monasteries, but where the monk resorted to flight or violence or gave himself up to indifference or despair, the nun was inclined to nervous irritability and visited her

Nunneries

Occupations

Trials

displeasure upon her sisters no more patient than herself. They "never quarreled unless the place and the cause were given." Too often one reads of harsh words, thoughtless accusations, and not infrequently a mutual pulling of hair:

"Of wycked wordes, I, Wrath, here wordes made,
Til 'thou liest' and 'thou liest' leaped out at once,
And eyther hitte other under the cheke."

Less serious was the natural feminine desire for the many little things that make life comfortable. They liked (and had) feather beds and pillows, somehow or other they procured buckles of gold, and the fur of foxes and rabbits for wrists and neck. The Archbishop of Rouen detected a generous use of saffron as a perfume, discovered that the nuns were fond of congregating in the bakehouse, or of drinking in the barn, and he felt obliged to forbid them "to care for their hair and tresses, or wear mantles of squirrel or of vair, . . . ornaments of blue chintz or such like on cuffs and sleeves, . . . or metal belts too curiously wrought." The nuns were fond of pets and the nunnery walls reëchoed to the barking or yap-ping of dogs, the chattering of monkeys and squirrels, and the varied songs or cries of birds. They gossiped much as women will, so that it was a common saying that "From miln and from market, from smithy and from nunnery, men bring tidings."

Much of the responsibility for these abuses rested upon the abbess, who as often as not set the lead rather than the example. Chaucer's Madame Eglentyne was probably no better and no worse than hundreds of her sister prioresses throughout Europe and:

"Full fetis was her cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene."

But the abbess had greater temptations than her nuns; she lived apart, and it was her duty to receive visitors and to provide for their entertainment. Her duties required considerable business ability, and upon her administration depended not only the spiritual but the material welfare of the foundation. Efficient abbesses were rare, and few nunneries approached the prosperity of the monasteries. Many skirted the dangerous shoals of insolvency, and to eke out the failing revenues found themselves obliged to "take in boarders" disguised as pupils. But the nunneries occupied an important place

in medieval life and offered to thousands of girls a protection and a freedom which medieval society would have denied to them.

Directly connected with monasticism and the spirit which produced it is the history of the Mendicant Orders. It was the spirit of mysticism encouraged by the contemplative life of the Cistercians, the joy of service which kept alive the simple lay societies organized for the relief of the unfortunate, the general religious fervor released by the Crusades, and the humanizing influence of the new romantic literature that combined to form the new mystic piety represented by the Mendicants or the *Friars* as they were more commonly designated. There had been prototypes of the new Orders in the past; the *Beguinnes*, the *Humiliati*, the *Poor Men of Lyons*, the *Waldensians*, and even the *Albigensians* had given expression to one or another aspect of the new spirit, but it was not until the appearance of Francis of Assisi that it became truly articulate and took on the shape that the world was to know so well.

Francis Bernardone, "the only perfect Christian since Christ," was born in 1182. His father was a prosperous merchant, and Francis shared such pleasant indulgences as appealed to the gilded youth of Assisi. But there was another side to this popular young man, a deeper spirit which was almost pagan in its pure joy in life and in all things that came from the hand of God, a spirit truly Christian in its appreciation of the essential brotherhood of mankind. For such a man the artificial pleasures of Assisi were hopelessly inadequate. Whether Francis underwent a conversion as the result of a chance meeting with a leper in whom he recognized a symbol of suffering humanity, mutely appealing for sympathy and care, or whether his true nature demanded complete expression, is a problem for the psychologist or the theologian. One fact is certain: Francis cut himself free from his family, his companions, and his former way of living, dedicated himself to the care and relief of the sick and the poor, and took as his bride the Lady Poverty. A bride "more distinguished, wealthy and beautiful than man ever saw." With his own hands he found and carried stones to repair a humble local church—a "house of God which men had left for beasts." He visited the lepers and washed their sores and gave them comfort with his words of cheer. The amazement and the indignation called

The Mendicant Orders

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Conversion

forth by his fateful renunciation of all that men hold dear, were changed into wonder and respect by his sincerity and obvious happiness. Men came to him to follow him and to learn, if they could, the secret of his joy.

The little band worked among the poor and the sick, supporting themselves by the labor of their hands or by begging, for Francis and his companions took the vow of poverty in its literal sense and avoided that subtlety which permitted an Order to hold property. In 1210 Francis sought and obtained papal approval for the work he was doing and the company he had formed. The work went rapidly forward and soon passed beyond the borders of Italy. In 1216 five thousand followers of Francis met at a great gathering at Assisi. Brother Giles had gone to Tunis and Brother Elias to Syria. Three years later Franciscans could be found in France, Germany, Hungary, and Spain, and Francis himself had journeyed to Damietta and had discussed the advantages of Christianity with the Sultan. In 1220 came a crisis; the membership had grown so rapidly that the naïve and spontaneous observance of Francis' charge to live "in loneliness and simplicity" became impossible. The members wanted a house to serve as a central headquarters, they felt the need of a constitution and a settled way of life. To Francis the introduction of formalism and an ordered rule of living meant the exclusion of that free play of individual genius and personality upon which depended the success of his whole program.

Francis was sound in his reasoning and was right when he refused to lead men who needed leadership and became even as the least of his former companions. His place was taken by Peter of Cataneo. In 1223 the desired Rule was finally formulated and approved by Pope Honorius III. The Rule insisted upon the adoption of absolute poverty, permitted the members to beg for their daily needs, and allowed though it did not urge them to support themselves by casual labor. The Poor Men of Assisi had become the Order of St Francis. Francis survived this transformation only three years, dying in 1226. His name was formally entered in the catalogue of saints by his old sympathizer Cardinal Ugolino, who now occupied the papal throne as Gregory IX.

Francis is the most lovable of all the saints; "a Saint most unconventional, full of sweet fancies, not only tender but jocose, living in sequestered woods and on the mountain-side, among birds and beasts, and gathering about him strange childlike followers, grown

*The early
followers*

*The crisis of
1220*

The Rule

*The character
of St Francis*

men with the simplicity of children, Brother Giles and Brother Juniper, whose very names are the signal for a smile.”⁴ With Francis, love was the highest truth and he loved all things with a love that was as joyous as it was sincere. In his “Song to the Sun” the best of paganism meets and is ennobled by the best of Christianity. The birds were his sisters and the animals his friends. No man ever suffered agony with more sweetness; when medieval oculists decided that burning alone could save his eyesight, he remarked: “Brother Fire, deal gently with me, you know how I have always loved you”; no man ever died in greater peace than he whose last words were—“Welcome, Sister Death.” There is no figure in history comparable to this “Jester of God” and lover of man, whose life is an “Italian page added to the New Testament.” Jacques de Vitry said everything when he described Francis as “a man, simple and unlettered, beloved of God and men.”

After Francis’ death the Order developed rapidly in numbers and in strength, but not without a deal of internal friction. The members were sharply divided between those who wished to adhere strictly to the corporate poverty desired by St Francis and those who favored a more liberal interpretation. The latter party was in the majority and in 1230 decided that the Order might possess furniture, books, and other movables and might *use* buildings owned by others. In 1245 it was further agreed that Rome should be regarded as the owner of the fixed property. The year 1232 saw a fateful change in the policy of the Order; Brother Elias, then General, decided to devote the Franciscan strength to the conversion of souls. This meant a body of men trained in theology, dialectic, and the art of preaching. Francis had foreseen this development with misgiving, but it was a task well worth the doing. The great masses of the people were in hopeless ignorance concerning the Christian Faith, for there was no one to instruct them; many of the parish priests were hardly better instructed than their flocks, while the monks who were qualified to teach were precluded from doing so by their enforced isolation. The Franciscans threw themselves into this new work with enthusiastic zeal; they flocked to the universities, wandered far and wide visiting the remotest hamlets, and by their preaching gave a charm and a dignity to the Christian Faith. They did not forget their duty to the poor, and their studies enabled them

*The spread
of the
Franciscans*

⁴ *Quarterly Review*, CLXXXIX (1899), p. 3.

to care for the sick with a better equipment than a mere desire to ease suffering humanity.

*St Dominic
(1170-1221)*

While Francis and his "troubadours of God" were singing their love for mankind, another saint, second only to Francis in his influence upon European Christianity, was already in the making. Dominic, uncertainly called Guzman, was born in Spain, at Calernega in 1170. He became a canon of the Cathedral Church at Osma, where he fell under the influence of Bishop Martin, an enthusiastic reformer. In 1201 he accompanied Bishop Diego to Toulouse. Here he found that there was work enough to be done, for Toulouse was torn apart by the bitter religious struggle between the Church and the Albigensians, who had the temerity to disapprove of the wealth and worldliness of the Church and to advocate a more equal distribution of land.

In Provence

The leaders of these heretics were men of education as well as of zeal, and Dominic quickly discovered that in preaching and in instruction lay the best means of attack. In 1206 he established schools at Prouille for the education and training of girls. For ten years he labored in Toulouse supported by Simon de Montfort and the local bishop and succeeded in attracting a band of followers eager to preach the world back to Christ. The Lateran Council of 1215 had forbidden the formation of new Orders, so Dominic selected for his little band the Rule of St Augustine, which because of its vagueness permitted that freedom of interpretation necessary for an order of itinerant preachers. In 1216 his program was approved by Honorius III; in 1220 he met St Francis and was so impressed by the man and his work that he incorporated into his own company the Franciscan ideal of poverty and the Franciscan method of self-support by begging.

His work

Dominic did not live to see the completion of his work for he died in the following year. He was an earnest champion of Catholic orthodoxy, an inspired preacher whose every waking thought centered about the glory and the greatness of God and His Church and whose faith had in it something of an ecstatic mysticism. He is responsible for the addition of fifteen *Paternosters*, one hundred and fifty *Salutations* to the ritual of the Church, and the establishment of the office of the *Holy Rosary*. While "with Francis, Love was the highest Truth, with Dominic Truth was the highest Love."⁵ He fought with all his might against heresy, ignorance,

⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, CXCIX (1904), p. 147.

and waning faith. He was charitable to all save the obstinate heretic:

“The hallowed wrestler, gentle to his own,
And to his enemies terrible.”

The rapidity with which the Mendicant Orders spread over Europe and won the confidence and respect of the people is almost incredible and would certainly have been impossible without a strong organization. Of the two Orders, the Dominicans developed the better organization, as might be expected by reason of their fundamental purpose of preaching, while the Franciscans were handicapped to some extent by their devotion to a simple idealism with an insistence upon the free obedience of the spirit. Both Orders were under a General, were organized on the provincial system for administrative purposes, and summoned “chapters” to formulate the general policy of the Order.

Naturally the two Orders had much in common; both represented the intermingling of the contemplative life of the cloister with the active career of the evangelist — two kinds of experience necessary for the successful friar. This combination was a fruitful breeding ground for mysticism and both Orders were affected by its influence. Both Orders adhered to corporate as well as individual poverty, a policy which compelled them to mendicancy; both combined evangelism and monasticism, both developed world-wide organizations under a central jurisdiction and authority. Both Orders recognized the need of study and thorough knowledge of the theology and doctrine of the Church; the greatest scholars of the Middle Ages were friars. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus were Dominicans; Duns Scotus, William of Occam, and Roger Bacon were Franciscans, and it was owing to the work of the Dominicans at the universities that Aristotelian philosophy was made orthodox and became “the chief buttress to the authority of the Church.”

This emphasis upon study and preaching put heavy demands upon the time of the friars. The difficulty was met by the foundation of a third Order, or *Tertiaries*, composed of lay brothers and sisters who lived at home and obligated themselves to pursue the ideals of the Order and to give them what support they could. Thousands upon thousands of earnest men and women eagerly joined the ranks of the Tertiaries, who brought the friars into closest intimacy with the people. The Mendicant Orders were the champions of orthodoxy

The organization of the Mendicants

The popularity of the friars

and the "two great standing armies" of the Church. To prepare their members for the work of evangelistic preaching and the defense of orthodoxy, the Dominicans organized an elaborate system of graded schools in the provinces. The training of the Dominicans and the almost military organization of the Order caused them to be chosen as the agents of the Inquisition, that terrible system which sought to eradicate heresy by torture and death, and so active were they that men came to call them *Domini canes* or the hounds of the Lord.

The success of the Dominicans and Franciscans encouraged imitation; the Carmelite hermits remodeled themselves after the Order of Friars, as did the Austin Friars or the "Friars Hermits of the Order of St Augustine." In time all of the friars fell away from their original ideals and were corrupted by their easy success, the power, influence, and acquisition of wealth, the "residences as lofty as the palaces of our kings and the incalculable treasures." But they had rendered a great service to the Church; their work had been largely social and evangelistic, and they represented as did no other religious body the democracy of Christianity. The system of begging had a spiritual value, in recalling the poverty of "Him who had nowhere to lay His head," and laid down a social principle, in the declaration that property was not entirely one's own but should in part be used for others. Finally, "by their preaching they strengthened the influence of religion on the common people."

Influence

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CHAPTER XIX

TOWNS AND TRADE

ALTHOUGH the great mass of the population lived in the country, on the feudal manors, or in the scattered villages or hamlets which clustered beneath the walls of monasteries and castles, there was always a considerable urban population and one which increased rapidly from the eleventh century. Towns had never ceased to exist even during the devastating period of the barbarian invasions, although for some centuries they had ceased to flourish. Etymology and archaeology provide helpful clues to the antiquity of many places, as where the termination *-chester* or *-ester* (Dor-chester, Cirencester) reveals the location of a Roman camp, or where a crumbling arch or the fragment of a wall betrays the former presence of imperial Rome. Though documentary evidence of town origins is both fragmentary and rare, ingenuity and deduction have filled in many of the wide gaps in our knowledge. It has been said that the difference between the medieval and the modern town lies in the fact that the former was the "refuge of a civilization" while the latter has become the "barracks of an industry." It would be unwise to put too much stress upon this happy distinction. The medieval town, as indeed every town, was an economic unit and most generally found its origin in its peculiar suitability to provide for certain economic needs, to protect the commodities intended for this purpose, to facilitate their transit, or to provide for their disposal or exchange.

Town origins Some towns arose where a river might be crossed by a ford or a bridge (Ox-ford, Cam-bridge); some, at the entrances of mountain passes, at the crossing or convergence of roads, or at similar places where merchants would desire to break a journey or meet with other merchants in the hope of making a trade. Hundreds grew up under the protecting wall of a monastery or castle, for there was much to be done in the business of attending to the wants of monk and noble; there were clothes to be fashioned and repaired, shoes to be made, weapons and armor to be fashioned or hammered back into shape, work for the mason and the roofer, the locksmith, wheelwright,

goldsmith, silversmith, and candle maker. A splendid example is the recorded account of the growth of Bruges. "After this castle was built, certain traders began to flock to the place in front of the gate to the bridge of the castle, that is, merchants, tavern-keepers, then other outsiders drifted in for the sake of the food and shelter of those who might have business with the count, who often came there. Houses and inns were erected for their accommodation, since there was not room for them within the castle. These habitations increased so rapidly that soon a large *ville* came into being which is called Brugghe (Bruges) by the people from the word for bridge."¹ Others developed round the garrisons that defended a vulnerable section of the frontier and catered to the needs and amusements of the military forces; some grew up at the sites of famous shrines to provide accommodation for the pilgrims and curios for the souvenir hunter. Some "just grew" like Topsy; a few were the result of the commercial or political acumen of an individual founder, as Munich confirms the intelligent foresight of Henry the Lion. Others, as Venice, sprang from the misfortunes of war.

Whatever their peculiar origin they were, almost without exception, under the protection and domination of a feudal overlord, a king, a duke, an archbishop, an abbot, or a simple baron. This relationship was not satisfactory to either party; the merchants and craftsmen found the arbitrary taxation of their overlord a personal irritation and a commercial liability; they resented the unintelligent control of the market by the noble lord or his agents, the imposition of tolls at bridge or ferry, and the regulations for the manufacture and sale of goods; they protested against the anomaly of applying the irrelevant (if well-meaning) principles of feudal jurisprudence to the peculiar problems of commercial litigation, and they were convinced that they could manage their business much better "on their own."

For his part, the overlord was not content. He did not approve of advancement for the lower classes in this world, whatever he might think of its possibility in the next, and he could scorn, but could not sympathize with, their desire for self-government. His troubles went further, for his townsmen were often obdurate. Massed as they were within the strict circuit of the walls, they had opportunities for exchanging views and for acquiring a sense of solidarity which their country cousins had not reached the point of imagining.

Bruges

Feudal limitations

¹ Quoted in Thompson, J. W., *Economic and Social History*, p. 772.

Time and fortune favored the town, and trade, despite the obstacles placed in its way by an obtuse feudalism, expanded as the Crusades opened wider markets and created a demand for commodities unknown or hitherto untried. The merchant became a man of means; he could rival his overlord in the comfort of his home and the excellence of his table, and he therefore felt his personal dependence all the more. The payment of a fixed annual sum (the *firma*) to the lord, in lieu of the arbitrary feudal exactions, the liberty to pass local regulations for the control of trade and the maintenance of the public peace, together with the right of trying violators in its own court, were the privileges the town most sought after and most willingly purchased.

This combination of personal dissatisfaction and realization of corporate strength resulted in a mounting spirit of resistance on the part of the townspeople, which compelled the lord to the embarrassing choice of yielding to their demands or reducing the city population to slavery. In most cases the lord adopted the former as being on the whole more satisfactory. He needed money to meet the heavy expenses of a Crusade, to quiet the persistent entreaties of his wife for the new silks, perfumes, and fineries which were coming into the market, or to procure the latest—and expensive—improvements in military equipment. He also found it easier to collect his dues in money than in kind. This situation was not reached at once; it required generations of quarrels, disputes, oppression, and bloodshed before the lord saw the folly of further resistance or the towns-men had consolidated their organization to the point of making it effective.

The medieval town was in reality two towns: there was the old *burg*, the castle area, essentially military in character, and the new *burg* (*faubourg*), a partially fortified zone lying about the central castle and occupied by those whose vocation was economic rather than military. It was the struggle of the "new" town to shake off its dependence upon the "old" that characterized the effort made to attain civic autonomy.

No uniform type of city government emerged from the many more or less successful attempts of the towns-men to rule themselves, although several features recur with sufficient frequency to be regarded as normal. In the great majority of towns the governmental system was under the direct or indirect control of three groups. Fundamentally, the government rested upon the body of burghers,

representing anything from a democracy to an oligarchy, of which the laws were the expressed wish and of which the officials were but the responsible agents. At the top was an executive body which might consist of one man (mayor or bailiff) as in northern France, or of a variable number of *consuls* as in southern France and Italy. In between the two was placed a selected council (in Italy the *credenza*, in France a body of *jurati*, *scabini*, or *echevins*), which might be important enough to levy taxes and supervise the militia and the general policy or might serve merely as an advisory body and a nominal check upon the executive. As evidence of its corporate existence the town possessed its magistrates, its town hall, its seal, and its belfry, for the burghers assembled at the sound of bells. Admission to the status of burgess was a highly esteemed privilege, of which we have a pale reminder when the "freedom" of a city is mystically bestowed upon a distinguished visitor. But in the Middle Ages civic rights and privileges were carefully reserved for the burgesses and freemen of the town, who came to be a favored group; burger-ship passed down from father to son, and town government became oligarchic.

Less independent than the communes and in fact possessing no political liberty though enjoying a considerable amount of protection, were the *communes surveillées* created by kings, lords, or the Church and controlled by their agents. Similar in character were the *bastides* of northern France, established for military purposes, and the *villes neuves* of the South, intended primarily to stimulate trade and commerce.

Allowing for the differences of geographic location, the medieval towns were very similar in external appearance. There was the town itself within its walls, the *faubourgs*, or suburbs outside or below the walls, and the *ban-league*, an area extending a variable distance on every side of the town over which the commune had jurisdiction. Each town was encircled by a wall, surmounted by towers which enabled the defenders to cover the approaches and which sometimes were used as granaries and storehouses. The expense of building a wall made it necessary that the space surrounded by it be restricted to a minimum, and this resulted in an overcrowding scarce exceeded by any modern city. Land was so limited and so desired that houses were often constructed upon the walls and even upon the bridges.

Within the town wide streets were few; a circular road followed

Physical appearance

Architecture

the inside of the walls to provide ready access to any threatened part, and sometimes a straight road of sufficient width "to give passage to a horseman with his lance across his saddle-bows" was built from one gate to another on the opposite side of the circle. For the rest the streets were miry, twisting lanes. The shortage of land produced a new style in architecture; the houses grew in height, each new story projecting itself further over the street until additional advance was stopped by the advancing stories of the house across the way and the street itself had become an arcade. This style was not without beauty, but it had the disadvantage of cutting off the light from the street below as effectively as some of the tallest buildings of today. But architectural devices did not keep pace with the growing population. Families combined to own a building, a story, or even a room! Those who could not obtain even such a coöperative apartment built themselves cottages in the moat outside the walls or, at worst, farther afield in one of the tiny hamlets that fell within the *ban-league*. Many of these suburbanites came to the city as soon as the gates were opened at sunrise and returned home when they were closed at sunset.

Houses

The early houses of wattle and thatch, which burned easily, gave way slowly, and under legislative pressure, to wooden houses with tiled roofs and finally to buildings of stone. Sanitation was unpleasantly primitive although public latrines and sewers are occasionally mentioned. "Up-to-date" cities boasted conduits and a water supply, but the great majority of the towns relied upon wells. If the streets were cleaned at all (and they were rarely paved) it was due either to the "gentle rain from heaven" or to the voracious curiosity of pigs and geese. Street lighting was very rare, and the darkness of night in the medieval town was only relieved by an occasional lamp before a shrine, except at festival times when the windows were bright with twinkling candles. Narrow and dirty as were the streets, they were made even more crowded by the stalls of the merchants. From the faces of the buildings and perilously close to the pedestrian's head were hung the quaint but heavy signs of the innkeeper and the vendor. A high wind would bring them crashing down, while any wind at all would cause them to swing and creak with sounds discordant enough.

No need to be dull

But life was not at all dull in the medieval town and if not actually gay was at least vigorous and colorful. There was plenty of activity in the building or repair of the churches and in the production of

goods for sale, and plenty of noise in the bickerings which accompanied bartering for goods in the market-square before the central church, when the peddlers hawked their wares, or the

“Cooks and their men were crying ‘Pies hot, all hot,
Good pork, good geese; come and dine.’”

or when

“Taverners told the same tale, ‘A drink of wine for nothing,
White wine, red wine, to wash the roast meat down.’”

Noise enough, too, with the hoarse shouts of the teamsters urging their horses or oxen to pull the clumsy wagons or sledges along the rough streets, with the bells from the churches, with the calls of the town crier, with the barking of dogs, the honking of geese, the grunting of swine, the shouting of children at play. There was company to be found at the taverns from early morn till night, for

“Daw the ditcher and a dozen more of them;
A fiddler, a ratter and a Cheapside scavenger,
A ropemaker, a lackey, and Rose the retailer,
A watchman and a hermit and the Tyburn hangman;
Godfrey the garlic-seller and Griffin the Welshman,
All early in the morning welcomed Glutton gladly
To try the good ale.”

There was color in the painted statues and walls of the churches, in the signboards before the shops, and in the costumes of the people. The merchant was a pleasant object, as

“with a forked berd,
In motteleye and hye on horse he sat,
Upon his head a Flaundryssh bever hat,
His bootes clasped fair and fetisly.”

But there was dirt and filth in the noisome streets and “Queen Eleanor of Provence, the pious but asthmatic wife of Henry III (of England), was driven away from Nottingham by the poisonous fumes of coal fires.”²

Diversions were few but the more appreciated and enjoyed for that reason. One could take little excursions into the meadows and fields beyond the walls and dance *Diversions*

“on the green grass with daisies pied.”

or wrestle (without rules) with some sturdy neighbor, play at ball

² Salzman, L. F., *op. cit.*, p. 87.

or skate upon the ice, for "fitting to and binding under their feet the shin-bones of some animal, and taking in their hands poles shod with iron, which at times they strike against the ice, they are carried along with as great rapidity as a bird flying or a bolt discharged from a cross-bow." Then there was bull or bear baiting and a clumsy sort of bowls or ninepins. Perhaps the church would celebrate one of the Festival Days with dramatic representations of biblical scenes, and then the guilds would vie with one another in the splendor or ingenuity of their floats. A troupe of jugglers, acrobats, tight-rope walkers, and men with trained animals from time to time passed through the town and broke the monotony of the daily round, or a wandering minstrel —

"A thing of shreds and patches
Of ballads, songs and snatches"

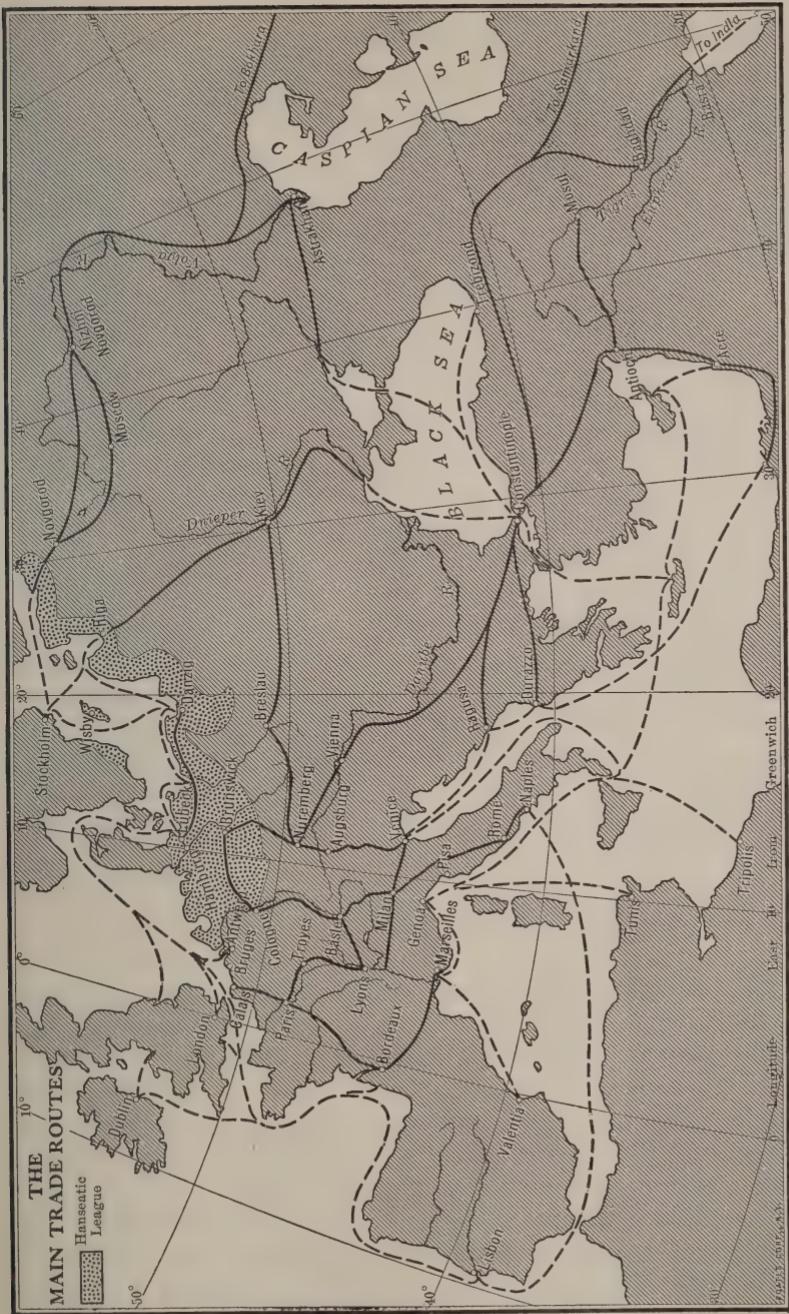
would collect and interest a crowd. Town life had a thousand attractions unknown to the manor, and even Thomas Aquinas pitied those whom fortune condemned to the countryside.

Trade was the very lifeblood of the town, and trade had expanded greatly since the tenth century, when Venice entered upon her amazing career of commercial prosperity and Rouen, Bruges, and Cologne reacted to the revival of navigation on the Seine, the Scheldt, and the Rhine.

The trade with the East was a constant factor, and when the Saracen conquests had brought direct communication with the Orient practically to an end, goods still filtered into the West by a circular route from Constantinople via Novgorod and the Baltic. But after the ninth century this route fell into disuse, and the Mediterranean once again assumed its rôle as a "lode-star for civilization and commerce," in which capacity it was greatly favored by the Crusades. Early in the eleventh century the Venetians had become masters of the Adriatic and had used the Alpine passes to reach the markets of Western Europe, for "the men of the Emperor (Conrad II) paid pepper to Canute." Trade with the Far East was for the most part carried on through intermediaries, though while the Tartar was still hesitating between the advantages of Christianity and Islam, direct access to China was possible for Christians. William of Ruysbruck visited Mangu Khan in the thirteenth century, criticized the Tartars for wiping their fingers on their trousers, but was pleased to notice that they used "a little fork, such as we (that

THE MAIN TRADE ROUTES

Hanseatic
League



is, the Flemings) use to take roasted pears (an Eastern importation) or apples out of wine." Of the Tartar women he remarks that "the lesser their noses be the fairer they are esteemed, but they shamefully daub their faces over with grease."

There was a North-South traffic which rivaled the Oriental in importance. It is obvious that the Eastern luxuries, drugs and spices, so much desired by Western Europe had to be paid for, either in coin or by an exchange of goods. The fact that Italian cities imported large amounts of gold from the East, for minting as well as for *objets d'art*, indicates that Europe relied chiefly upon a natural economy. Raw materials were plentiful; the northern countries were rich in fish, wool, furs, hides and leather, parchment, honey, wax, wood, tar, millstones, metals, and amber; Flanders was known everywhere for its fine textiles; Holland offered cheese and cattle. Germany specialized in the (literal) manufacture of such wooden essentials as barrels, bowls, shovels, and the multiple requirements of shipwrights and builders, in objects of horn and bone, in carved amber (especially for rosaries), while the value of its iron and steel products followed closely after wines and millstones. In addition to acting as centers of an *entrepôt* trade with the East, the cities of Italy and southern France specialized in the manufacture of glass, colored silks, and cloths of excellent texture, together with *objets d'art* in gold, silver, or leather, which they exchanged for the timber, wax, honey, hides, furs, and fish of the North. Aquila supplied saffron to half of Europe, and Bordeaux became famous for its wines.

"Of Yseland to wryte is little nede
Save of stockfishe."

The wide extent of medieval commerce is the more remarkable when the obstacles placed in the way of transportation by nature and by man are considered. The art of building roads had declined with the Romans, and governmental interest in their upkeep and repair had ceased with Charlemagne. Uncambered and undrained, covered with rocks or stones and pitted with sink holes, the roads choked the voyager with dust when the weather was dry, became all but impassable in winter, and scarce navigable after rain. Owners of land were supposed to keep in repair the roads and bridges within their holdings, but they often fell far short of their obligations. "The care of roads was looked upon as a pious and charitable

duty and to endow a bridge or a stretch of highway or to labor upon the same, was efficacious in absolving from sin, just as the giving of alms or the making of a pilgrimage.”³ Bridges fared somewhat better, for men sometimes organized themselves into societies to build and repair bridges. So the “Brothers of the Bridge” constructed the famous Pont d’Avignon, and the “first stone bridge over the Thames was begun in the latter part of the twelfth century by the head of such an order — Peter of Colechurch.” Fifteen to twenty miles a day was respectable going.

To the bad state of the roads and bridges and to the hardships of mountain transit were added the obstacles placed by man. Each feudal lord, lay or cleric, took an interest in commerce to the extent, at least, of attempting to procure some profit for himself by the exactation of tolls and taxes, which testify as well to the ingenuity as *Tolls* to the greed of the exactor. There were tolls to pay upon entering a lord’s territory, a *passage* for transit, a *charriage* upon each wagon, a *peage* if the merchant went on foot or with a pack mule, a *pontage* to cross the bridge, a *rivage* to cross the river, and a *travers* to use a ford. The goods themselves (and particularly wines) were subject to special taxes (*telonia*). There were duties at the frontiers, fees for the use of standard weights and measures at the fairs, and charges for permission to sell in the markets at stalls which must be rented. There was also the confusion of coinage, of weights and measures, and of languages to be confronted. Where ingenuity stopped, force began. Gangs of desperadoes lurked along the highways to rob the merchant of his wares; barons, brought low by the failure of the old manorial economy to keep pace with the rising prices, showed an embarrassing aptitude for highway robbery which won for them the goods and execration of the merchants and a permanent place in literature. Small wonder that merchants traveled in groups (as ships might join a convoy in war time) or attached themselves to a pilgrimage, or that the price to the ultimate consumer was high.

Travel by water ranked in danger with travel by land, despite the efforts of river patrols. “That it may please Thee to preserve *Water travel* all that travel by land or by water” was not the least earnestly repeated section of the Litany. The largest ships rarely exceeded five hundred tons burden; the great majority were much smaller. The compass was known to the men of Amalfi perhaps as early as

³ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

Strandage

Wreckers

Fairs

*The fairs of
Champagne*

the tenth century and certainly to others by the twelfth. The minstrel Guiot de Provins says that the sailors "have also an ugly brown stone, to which iron joins of its own accord. This they touch with a needle, which they then lay lengthwise in a rush, so that it may float in water; and it turns its point toward the star with certainty." But the compass was not in wide use, and captains braved the shoals and reefs and hidden rocks to keep the advantage of proximity to the shore. Shipwreck meant not only a possible loss of life but a very probable loss of cargo, since a particularly vicious custom (*strandage*) regarded merchandise which escaped the sea as the property of the lord who owned that section of the shore. This practice led to the creation of a class of professional wreckers and the placing of false lights as a lure for unsuspecting mariners. A Breton lord regarded a certain submerged rock as the most precious stone in his crown. Pirates infested sea and river alike, adding to the perils of water travel. A sea voyage could not have been very pleasant; the accommodation for passengers was generally "below decks," inadequate as to space, light, and air.

The goal of the majority of the merchants who dared the roads or traveled the water was, for the most part, one or another of the great fairs which were held periodically in every European country. The fair of St Denis (Paris) had a continuous history since its establishment in the seventh century by the Merovingian king, Dagobert. The fairs had a semireligious character (indeed the word itself is derived from *feria* or Holy Day) and were often opened on the celebration of some saint's anniversary. The fair was a highly profitable business for the lord in whose territory it was held, and in most cases he was anxious to attract as many merchants as possible, using his influence to protect them not only during the time of the fair but also during their journey to his lands and return.

Champagne held six fairs of first importance and so regulated that there was no overlapping in dates and each of such duration (about six weeks) that merchants might come at any season or remain the entire year with profit. The fairs of Flanders and Brabant were also very popular, and after the thirteenth century the fair at Bruges was the most frequented in Europe. To them came "a cosmopolitan crowd of every race, language and costume, from Scotland to Sicily and from Castile to Damascus. Egyptian, Syrian, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Frenchman, Spaniard, German, Hollander, Brabanter, Fleming, Englishman, and Scot mingled and

jostled each other through the great halls or added their voices to the eager, humming babel that rose and fell around the pillars where the bargaining and chaffering was going on. And the omnipresent Jew from everywhere added his individuality to the throng.”⁴ English merchants were particularly active in the latter part of the Middle Ages:

“ To whyche martis, that Englisse men call feyres
 Iche nacion ofte make here repayeres,
 Englysshe and Frensh, Lumbards, Januayes
 Cathalones, theder take here wayes,
 Scottes, Spaynarde, Iresshmen there abydes,
 Wythe grete plente bringing of salt hydes,
 And I here saye that we in Braban lye,
 Flanders and Seland, we bye more marchaundy
 In common use, then done all other nacions.”

The goods for sale were as diverse as the buyers and sellers. One could buy anything from a millstone or a plowshare to an ivory curio or a phial of delicate perfume. Here the lords bargained for their silken robes and for feathers, perfumes, jewels and spices, for their wives; the apothecary for his drugs, the chef for his spices, the steward for his grain; and who so desired could buy salt, tar, hemp, canvas, linens, dates, wax, honey, tallow, vegetables, livestock, wines, beer, and other things too numerous to mention.

As in all fairs, at all times there flocked to these gatherings men and women who made a living out of the curiosity, gullibility, innocence, or weakness of the visitors. The acrobats and jugglers, sharpers and cutpurses, minstrels and prostitutes joined the great crowds and sought their fortune.

All of these people and their goods needed supervision if the fair was to be of fullest service. “ As one of the chief sources of revenue . . . it was but natural that the fair in its administration should overshadow the local arrangements or even completely displace them during the period of the fair.” Everything was subject to strict regulation: the location of the stalls, the days and even the hours when such goods might or might not be sold, the weights and measures to be used or avoided, the coins to be accepted or refused, and the proper forms for a valid contract. Closely connected with the regulations were the fees charged for various services: the *tonlieu fees*

*Regulation
of the fairs*

⁴ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 600.

exacted for every purchase made, rentals for stalls, a fee to enter the limits of the fair and another to depart, a fee to use the standard weight and measure, or a fine for not using them, fees for attesting a contract, and a special tax paid by the Jews.

Courts

As might be expected in an assemblage composed of men from every quarter of Europe and beyond, speaking different tongues and following different commercial procedure, there was ample scope for litigation. To meet this situation special courts (the English called them "Pie-Powder Courts," from *pied-poudré*, "dusty-foot") were instituted to settle such disputes as might arise between buyer and seller, to "prove" contracts, or to test the validity of fines. The receipts from these courts went to swell the revenues of the local lord.

Value

The medieval fair served as a clearing house for ideas as well as for goods. Men became acquainted with new methods of production and better means of transportation; they learned the benefits of a standard weight and a standard measure; they came to employ bills of exchange and letters of credit and to speak in terms of money of account. Prosperous merchants attended the fairs vicariously, or if attending personally they associated sons or relatives in the business to manage the affairs at home, and so established "companies." Even companies with "limited liability" are recorded. The universality of goods created new demands which broke through the old provincialism, broke down the self-sufficiency of the manor, and broke up the proud isolation of the town. The fair helped the minstrel to enrich his stock of fables, to vary his music and his scheme of rhymes. In short, the fair served every purpose now performed by the modern Exhibition or World's Fair magnified a thousandfold, for, saving the peddler with his poor pack of needles, pins, and soap, the rare things of this world could not be otherwise procured.

The market

Next in importance to the fair as a medium for the exchange of goods was the market. The market was distinctly a local affair and originally a valued part of the feudal prerogative. Normally held once a week, on Saturday or Sunday, it enabled the peasants to dispose of the surplus produce of the manor and to receive in exchange the manufactured goods of the town. The market-square was usually the open space before the great church and was signalized by a Market-Cross sometimes surmounted by a glove or other emblem. In France a statue of Roland or a symbolic "Roland" was occa-

sionally substituted. In any case, the Cross or the "Roland" was evidence of the right to hold a market. Every town was eager to obtain this right, together with the privilege of regulating the hours of sale and the quality, quantity, price, and class of goods to be sold, and many authorities have traced the rise of the towns from the privilege granted by the lord to have a market.

When a town succeeded in getting control of its own market, that control was generally found to be in the hands of an association known as the guild merchant, probably a spontaneous growth, called into being to meet the economic needs of increasing commercial activity, and a natural (perhaps even essential) institution to safeguard the interests of the trading class. Economic life was organized on the basis of the town and the village, and they, not the State, represented the vital principle of medieval economy. "A municipal rather than a national policy constituted the main spring of social development," and the whole of town life in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Mainz in Germany and Burford in England had guilds in the eleventh century) focused on the merchant guilds.

It was a fundamental principle of the guild merchant that no person should be allowed to trade within the town-limits without being enrolled in the guild, although for exceptional purposes and at exceptional times the right of trading was conceded in return for fixed tolls and fees and under stated conditions. The members of the guild merchant were conscious that in their own self-interest some laxity should be allowed, and in consequence non-guildsmen could sell at wholesale if they paid toll, sold to guildsmen only, and in return purchased only certain stipulated commodities. Victuals, however, might be sold at retail.

The primary qualification for membership in the guild seems to have been the obligation and ability to be at "scot and lot," that is, to share in the common charges, dues, and fines of the association. Indeed, one school of theorists derives the name of guild from the Anglo-Saxon *gilde*, a "rateable payment" toward a common charge.

At the head of the guild was an alderman assisted by wardens (or *echevins*), all of whom were appointed at the general meeting (the morning speech) of the assembly. The guild merchant of Southampton gloried in an alderman, a seneschal, a chaplain, four *echevins*, and an usher. The alderman and his wardens, besides summoning and presiding over the meetings and festivities, managed

The "guild merchant"

Purpose

Organization

the funds of the society and administered such estates as the guild purchased or otherwise acquired. To assist the presiding officers, to function as an advisory body, and to propose legislation, there was commonly a small inner council of from twelve to twenty-four members. But legislation affecting the guild as an entity required the assent and approval of the assembly. Such ordinances as were enacted by the association were enforced in the guild court, which also decided questions concerning the adulteration of goods, the refusal of members to share their purchases with their guild brethren, and other offenses against the generally accepted privileges of the guild. Commercial questions of importance were, as a rule, brought before the regular town court.

Functions

The guild merchant procured for its members the exclusive right to buy and sell within the borough, on market days and at all other times, without payment of toll or custom. The only exceptions to this ironclad rule were transactions at the periodic fairs and the retailing of victuals. The guildsman was thus protected from the dangers or inconveniences of unlimited competition, and he was further assisted (or perhaps hampered) by the so-called "right of lot," the privilege of sharing in any transaction of a commercial nature made by a fellow guildsman at the original terms, provided that he was present when the bargain was being made and that the bargainer was not the mayor.

Benefits

Admission to membership brought with it the acquisition of a status recognized beyond the limits of the borough. The guildsman was backed by the resources and prestige of his society and supported by its common letters or *tests* whenever he journeyed abroad. These *tests* served as letters of introduction, of recommendation, and even of credit. Should he become involved with the authorities of any other town, his guild would intervene in his behalf. Beyond the advantages which accrued to him as an individual trader, the guildsman was entitled to the benefits of collective bargaining. At Bristol the guild claimed and acquired the first option on all imported cargoes. "This practice sprang partly from a determination to place the merchant stranger always at a disadvantage and partly to promote equal opportunities for trade among the brotherhood."

Noneconomic interests

The guild merchant did not devote all of its energies to commercial matters. The brotherhood entered into a great part of everyday life. Sick guildsmen were visited and wine and food sent to them from the feasts; brethren who had fallen into poverty were relieved; their

daughters were dowered for marriage or the convent; their children educated at the endowed schools. Even death did not end the member's privileges, for his funeral was attended (and if necessary paid for) by his brethren and Masses were sung for his soul.

The guild merchant could not, or at least did not, avoid the temptation to become exclusive. The property qualifications were raised, ruinous banquets had to be given by the initiates, and the robes of the guildsmen increased in splendor and in price. Class distinctions crept into the statutes, which excluded from membership anyone "with dirty hands" or "with blue nails," or "who hawks his wares in the streets." Guild exclusiveness, its narrow spirit of monopoly, and its unreasoning jealousy of strangers became anomalies in an age of expanding markets, and the influence of the guild merchant was superseded by that of the craft-guild.

As the guild merchant, the craft-guild was an association of men whose "primary object was to make rules for the trade and to keep a monopoly for the members," but unlike the guild merchant it was restricted to the men engaged in one specific trade. Again, whereas the guild merchant made no distinction between its members, the craft-guild recognized three classes of men under its control: the "master craftsman" who was a full member, the "journeyman" or wage earner who had completed his training but had not yet been accepted by the guild, and the "apprentice" still in his course of instruction. The relation between master and apprentice was much more intimate than that between the modern employer and employee. The masters were masters of a craft, not of workmen. The apprentice had a very definite right to be taught the trade of his master in every particular and without reserve. He lived in his master's house, ate at his table, and had before him the pleasant (or lucrative) prospect of obtaining the hand of his master's daughter and a share in the business.

The craft-guild bound the worker with a network of restrictions in an attempt to protect the producer against cheap labor and the consumer against defective materials and bad workmanship. The approval of the guild was a hallmark of good faith. In the interests of the guild, upon which a bad workman brought discredit, the quality of materials was subject to regulation; certain articles (shoes and clothes) must be fashioned in the front of the shop that the passer-by might see the material and the workmanship; night work was prohibited as conducive to faulty production; careless or ineffi-

The craft-guilds

Apprenticeship

Guild regulations

cient workmen were fined at the first offense and excluded from the trade at the third, and periodic inspections of the shops were made by the officials of the guild. The guild also attempted to regulate the wages of journeyman and apprentice, to keep the hours of labor within limits consistent with good workmanship, to establish holidays, and to determine the just price of the finished article.

"But one need not suppose that the medieval tradesman was always an honest and innocent being uncorrupted by commercialism." The thirteenth century preacher, Berthold of Regensburg says: "Ye that work in clothing, silks or wool or fur, shoes or gloves or girdles; . . . men must needs have clothing, therefore should ye so serve them as to do your work truly; not to steal half the cloth, or to use other guile, mixing hair with your wool or stretching it out longer, whereby a man thinketh to have gotten good cloth, yet thou hast stretched it longer than it should be, and makest a good cloth into useless stuff. Nowadays no man can find a good hat for thy falsehood; the rain will pour down through the brim into his bosom. Even such deceit is there in shoes, in furs, in skins; a man sells an old skin for a new; and how manifold are your deceipts no man knoweth so well as thou and thy master the Devil."⁵

Like the guild merchant, the craft-guild had extensive non-industrial interests. It acted as a friendly society for the relief of its indigent members; it constructed almshouses and established free schools; it generally took over the upkeep of the shrine dedicated to the patron saint of the craft; it took a lively interest in the efforts of the Church to dramatize the more popular episodes of the Old and New Testaments. The armorers could be relied upon to give a terrifying if anachronistic display of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden or of the heroic duel between David and Goliath; the shipwrights vied in ingenuity or fancy with the fishers and mariners in a reconstruction of Noah's Ark and the Flood, while the vintners preferred the Marriage of Cana.

"At the year's end, the aldermen and stewards, and the brethren and sistern of the gild, meet together, on the feast of St Elene. And then a fair youth, the fairest they can find, is picked out, and is clad as a queen, like to St Elene. And an old man goes before this youth, carrying a cross, and another old man carrying a shovel, in token of the finding of the Holy Cross. The sistern of the gild follow after, two and two; and then the brethren, two and two; and

Honesty in production

Non-industrial interests

A guild at Beverley

⁵ Coulton, G. G., *Life in the Middle Ages*, III, 57.

then the two stewards; and after all follows the alderman. And so, all fairly clad, they go in procession, with much music, to the church of the Friars Minor of Beverly; and there, at the altar of St Elene, solemn Mass is celebrated, and every one of the gild makes offering of a penny. The Mass ended, and all prayers said, they go home, and, after dinner, all the gild meet in a room within the hall of the gild, and there they eat bread and cheese, and drink as much ale as is good for them. Afterwards, they choose, by unanimous assent, out of the best men of the gild, an alderman and two stewards for the next year; and to these must be handed over all the goods of the gild. The alderman and stewards are bound to maintain two, three or four, bed-ridden poor folk while they live; and when these die, they must bury them and choose others in their place and in like manner maintain them. Three wax lights are kept burning every Sunday and feast day, in honor of St Elene; and at the morning mass of Christmas Day, thirteen wax lights are burned. There are services for the dead, and offerings. Any money in hand at the end of the year is spent in repairing the chapel of the gild, and in gifts to the poor."

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CHAPTER XX

FEUDAL SOCIETY

DURING the century and a half which witnessed the rise and fall of the Carolingian dynasty, the failure or inability of the central government to maintain public order and to afford effective protection to the individual caused men to devise for themselves some method of performing those services which the modern taxpayer takes for granted as being the business of the State. The medieval substitute for the State was the complication known as feudalism. The term feudalism has been so widely and so carelessly used that it is in danger of meaning nothing by attempting to mean everything. For feudalism was many things, which in their interrelationships crystallized, between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, into a system. Feudalism began with the introduction of a method of land tenure involving an emphasis upon personal relation. From these basic elements there developed a military organization and a system of judicial and political order.

Feudalism

Physically, feudalism rested upon land: land which not only provided food, clothing, and shelter for all men, but the possession of which determined one's social and, incidentally, one's political position. The peculiar system of land tenure which characterized feudalism was formed of elements partly Roman and partly Germanic. The Roman practice of *precarium* was particularly useful. In general, for the practice assumed many forms, the *precarium* was a revocable grant of land, allowing the owner to retain possession of the land while the tenant-at-will enjoyed the usufruct. The *precarium* naturally appealed to large landowners who could thus reward followers or attract cultivators without diminishing their landed property. The Church especially favored this practice for it provided an escape from canon law which forbade the alienation of Church property. The *beneficium* of the Middle Ages was very similar, but generally involving a closer personal bond—a definite oath of allegiance. *Beneficia*, most frequently granted as rewards or bids for service, might be granted upon request, or created when a landowner, harassed by debts or enemies, transferred his title to a

Land tenure

Beneficium

Patrocinium stronger lord, "commanding" himself to his protection and continuing to occupy the land as a tenant-at-will. The landless man might, through a process known as *patrocinium*, be permitted to till a few acres in return for predial service on the lord's demesne land.

Comitatus From Germany came the ideas involved in the new personal relationship. Long before the Germans had entered the Empire, their chieftains had been accustomed to attach to themselves a picked group of warriors, the *comitatus*, bound by an oath of utmost sanctity which guaranteed not only their personal service in time of war but their loyalty to their chieftains at all times. In return for this service and fidelity, the leaders kept their followers in food and military equipment, promised their protection, and rewarded them with a share of the spoils of war.

Fief The fief of the Middle Ages was the *beneficium* become hereditary, the contract made sacred by a vow of personal loyalty. The contractual relation kept the mutual obligations within reasonable and recognized limits; the principle of personal loyalty added an essential dignity to the relationship, for "human life in its deepest and largest terms cannot be lived upon terms of utility and contract." Upon the receipt of a fief the vassal knelt before the lord and took the oath of *homage*, by which he recognized himself as the "man" of the lord, to keep the terms of the contract by which he was to hold his fief. No two fiefs were held upon identical terms, but there is a sufficient similarity to warrant a general description.

Homage In return for the land received the vassal was expected to give equivalent service. For forty days in every year he could be called upon to render military service, at his own expense and in person, with as many armed followers as the extent of his fief demanded. In England he was liable for "castle-ward," that is, to do garrison duty at one of his lord's castles, or to come to his lord's defense if he were attacked. The lord could require the personal attendance of his vassals to take counsel with them or for reasons purely social; whenever there was litigation between vassals or between lord and vassal, then the lord held his court and summoned all of his vassals to sit in judgment upon the point in dispute. Money payments were made, but normally at rare intervals and on definite occasions. In England three such payments, known as *aids*, were demanded: whenever the lord had been captured and was held for ransom by his enemy, when the lord's son was admitted to the ranks of knighthood, and when it was necessary to provide a dower for the lord's

The duties of a vassal

Aids

daughter. Unusual *aids* might be levied with the vassal's consent. Further payment termed a *relief* was due whenever the original parties to the relationship were changed; that is, whenever the lord or his vassal died and an heir succeeded.

Relief

The lord was sometimes entitled to other rights over the fief and the family of his vassal; a French lord could require maintenance for himself and his retinue (the *droit de gîte*) if he passed through the territory of his vassal. More important was his control over the minor members of his vassal's family. The fief had a military and political significance as well as an economic one, and it was a matter of first importance that the holder should be both capable and trustworthy. Hence, when a vassal died leaving only minor sons or a daughter to inherit, the lord enjoyed the "right of wardship." The minor sons were brought to one of the lord's castles and given such training as would fit them for proper service as faithful vassals. In the meantime the lord administered the fief and appropriated the revenue. If there were no sons the eldest daughter inherited. Here again the lord was vitally interested, since by the nature of medieval conditions, with their constant demand upon military service, the administration of a fief was a man's job. It was advisable, therefore, to get the girl married as quickly as possible and to one who had military if not connubial qualifications. Medieval epics and romances give frequent illustration of the need for *mariages de convenance* —

*Droit de gîte**Wardship**Marriage*

"When hur fadur was dede,
 Moche warre began to sprede
 Yn hur lande alle abowte;
 Therefore sche ys geven to rede,
 To take a lorde to rewle and to lede
 Hur londe wythe hys rowte;
 A nobulle knyghte, that cowde or myght
 Rewle hur londe, wyth gode ryght
 That men myght drede and dowte! "

and this heiress-bride was a mature miss of seven! If there were no heirs the fief *escheated* to the lord. His only other method of recovery was by forfeiture, if the vassal refused to keep the conditions of the original bargain or was guilty of treasonable conduct. For his part the lord had obligations: he was bound to protect his vassal whenever he was attacked, to grant him the privilege of the feudal court, and to look after his widow and children. When a

lord failed to fulfill his duties the vassal was released from further obedience.

The complexities in the relationship between lord and vassal became greatly emphasized in the process of *subinfeudation*. The desire to attain land often resulted in a man's becoming the vassal of more than one lord; conversely, a vassal might find that his fief was too large to be administered by one person and in consequence would bestow sections of it upon men desiring to become vassals; in this latter case his original obligation to his lord remained unchanged. Thus men became both lords and vassals, and it was not impossible, in respect to a certain portion of land, for a lord to be the vassal of his own vassal. *Subinfeudation* possessed some merits: it facilitated management, and for military purposes it was easier, on a vast estate which might be made up of several scattered sections, to collect men by units. The defects were more obvious: the over-lord could not interfere in or exercise any rights over the sub-fief, so that the efficient working of the system depended, in the last analysis, upon the loyalty of the meanest vassal or upon the power of his lord to control him. The network of required loyalties was always a strain and could be an embarrassment to him whose lords were mutually antagonistic.

But this system, "a very excellent device if it could have been administered by archangels," spread over all of Western Europe, greatly helped by the disintegration of society through the invasions of Northmen, Saracens, and Slavs, and through the evident inability of the Carolingian State to protect the individual, who was thus forced to protect himself. Feudalism was not mere oppression nor was it anarchy. "In spite of its often violent and sinister character, there can be no doubt that feudalism as a whole was a phenomenon of social progress, of social integration, and not one of decay. . . . By fixing society to the soil feudalism brought an end to the fluctuations that had characterized the barbaric life of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. Europe had become more stabilized. The principles upon which feudalism rested were different and of higher morality than the autocracy and slavocracy of the later Roman Empire. Feudalism reduced the earlier and excessive barbaric individualism to obedience to law and order, crystallized in institutions of suzerainty, vassalage, fidelity, service, the rights and duties of contract. In its finest form it produced a new civilization."¹ By

General estimate

¹ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 701.

the thirteenth century and with the exception of sections of Saxony, Tuscany, and Languedoc there was "no land without a lord."

All fiefs were not in land; the privilege of collecting tolls along a highway or at a bridge, a monopoly in the production of a certain article or in the performance of some necessary service, a post of importance in the government, or the enjoyment of the revenues of a lay or clerical estate might be granted under feudal tenure. As the feudal holding might vary in kind, so might the service rendered by the vassal. We even have the record of one man whose knightly service consisted in holding a basin for the seasick head of his lord.

As feudalism developed into an institution it inevitably discarded many of its early vagaries and set up for itself a standard to which feudal society at least tended to conform. This standard was attained in the phenomenon known as "chivalry." Chivalry has both its champions and its adversaries, the one too often carried away by a romantic idealism, the other as frequently prejudiced by the undoubtedly violence of the age and unable to believe in the power of an ideal to curb the selfish ambitions of mankind. Chivalry worked no miracles and created no golden age, but it did establish a standard of conduct which survived, and it did represent a protest — perhaps an unconscious protest — against materialism.

Historically, chivalry made its appearance at a comparatively late date in the Middle Ages. Antiquarians find its origin in the custom, prevalent among the German tribes, of solemnly investing their youths with military equipment at the time of adolescence. But as late as the eleventh century the investing of knighthood was still a simple ceremony. The twelfth century saw a remarkable alteration in the standard of duties expected of the knight, and the credit for this improvement must be shared by the Church and by the poets of France and Germany. When the Council of Clermont (1095) urged every noble youth to take a vow "to defend to the uttermost, the oppressed, the widow and the orphan; and that women of noble birth should enjoy his special care," then "Christian Chivalry as distinct from mere feudal knighthood had been brought into existence."

The poet's conception of the "verie perfect gentle knyght" and the "swete ladye" whose wish was a command presented ideals which many followed and some few attained, even if "nowhere outside the realm of fiction could such a paragon as Parsifal be found." But an age which could admire a Parsifal and did produce a St

Chivalry

Origin?

Louis and a Bayard possessed qualities of heart which a later age might envy without shame. The idealism which lifted chivalry from mere feudalism was somewhat akin to Browning's goldsmith who

“mingles gold
With gold's alloy, and, duly tempering both
Effects a manageable mass, then works! ”

Training of the knight
As page
As squire

The duties imposed by chivalry were not easily learned, and the young noble was subjected to a long apprenticeship before he was entitled to his spurs. “Until the age of seven the child was kept under his mother's care. Then he was sent to be a page in the castle of his father's feudal lord. There for seven years he remained in charge of the women, who besides instructing him — rather prematurely the present age would say — in the rudiments of love, taught him to perform all kinds of menial household duties and to render all sorts of personal services. They made him understand moreover — a notable lesson never learned in pagan antiquity — that in thus humbly serving he was not incurring any loss of dignity. They further instilled into him his duties, in the manner dear to schoolmistresses of all ages; . . . warned him against pride, envy, anger, idleness, gluttony, and luxury; further, they gave him systematic information respecting the Seven Virtues, the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Articles of Faith and the Fourteen Works of Mercy. As he drew near the end of his period as page, he was taught by the men to run, leap, wrestle and ride; to use toy weapons, to help arm his lord himself in the implements of his more serious warfare. At the age of fourteen the page passed out of the tutelage of the women — though not out of reach of their influence — and became a squire.” As a squire he learned the “use of arms, the management of the heavy war-horse, the breaking-in of chargers, the keeping in good order of the knight's equipment. Besides these military duties, however, he had to undergo a strenuous course of exercise calculated to increase his strength and dexterity; he had also to learn skill in various sports, of which hunting and hawking were the chief. Further, in order that he might be able to fulfill the requirements of a gallant in evening hours, the nascent squire had to practice the arts of music and poetry, and to learn to play such games as chess and backgammon. The squire, moreover, still combined such domestic duties as carving the meat, waiting at table and

preparing the Hall for dances or charades.”² One recalls Chaucer’s Squire who

“ Syngynge . . . was, or flowtynge, al the day . . .
 Wel cowde he sitte on hors, and wel cowde ryde.
 He cowde songes wel make and endite,
 Justne and eek daunce, and wel purtraye and write . . .
 Curteys he was, lowly and servysable,
 And carf beforne his fadur at the table.”

When the squire had reached the age of twenty-one, provided he had not already been knighted for bravery upon some field of battle, he was eligible to pass into the coveted ranks of the knights. A ceremony impressive and highly symbolical accompanied this last stage, which included the Bath of Purification, a fast, an all-night vigil in the church, a solemn confession followed by attendance at Mass, the episcopal blessing of the sword, the taking of the knightly vows, the actual investiture of the order, the arming of the new knight, and his demonstration of his ability.

“ To-day was y maked knyght!
 Owther schalle he sle me sone.
 Or on hym y schalle wynne my schone
 Thorow the grace of God Almyght! ”

Closely connected with chivalry was the development of heraldry, which at first glance one might describe with the elder Mr. Weller as “well known to be a collection of fabulous animals” but which in fact was a most useful science. From the moment of the introduction of the closed helmet which hid the face of the leader from his followers, it was essential that some other means of recognition be devised to the end that, in the hurly-burly of battle, men could distinguish their lord or friends. To carry additional equipment was inexpedient, and the idea of marking the shield with a distinctive sign or emblem was as effective as it was simple. A cross was most natural and obvious, but it was essential to have a cross which was different from the cross of another, and it is a tribute to medieval ingenuity that heraldry boasts some two hundred and eighty-five variations of this coveted symbol. Zoölogy, botany, architecture, and industry all made their contributions; there are dogs, leopards, eagles, dragons, griffons, castles, sickles, wheatstacks, roses, straight lines, curved lines, and, above all, lions of every kind and condition,

*Investiture of
knighthood*

Heraldry

² Prestage, E. (editor), *Chivalry*, pp. 22-23.

sitting, sleeping, raging, and rampant; "big lions, little lions, half-lions, quarter-lions, and, most humiliating of all, a lion "quartered" and "coupé in all parts" to adorn the coat of the Maitlands."³

A man's coat of arms was an infallible clue to his social position, for it showed in its quarterings the families with which he was connected and solved at once that delicate uncertainty as to whether he were a gentleman or no. Lady Bemers, the highly respectable prioress of Sopewell, discovered by some means or other that Christ was "a gentylman on his moder's side." In the course of time, as the result of the many marriages of many generations, the science of heraldry became a highly complicated one and invented a jargon of its own which few now living can understand. One small example should be sufficient and conclusive:

"per bend two piles triple-pointed, bowed and counterpoised bend-sinisterways."⁴

It was well that the Middle Ages had somewhat of idealism, for life was hard. Until the twelfth century the castle of the lord was a sorry affair. Private castles were rare in France until the end of the tenth century and in England for another hundred years. Those that did exist were built of timber, not unlike an early American blockhouse, and protected by a ditch. An outer ditch, bordered by a stockade of timber and planks, completed the defenses.

It was only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the great stone structures arose which were so typical of the Middle Ages; after the fourteenth century gunpowder reduced them to interesting antiquities. The lord who did not possess a castle lived in a "hall" which took its name from the main apartment. As late as the twelfth century the hall, "standing on the ground floor and open to the roof, still formed the principal feature of the building." Here was done all of the cooking (behind a partition at one end), eating, and drinking; here visitors were received and here slept the servants and the uninfluential guests. Adjoining the hall, or perhaps above it and reached by an outside staircase, was the "chamber" or sleeping quarters for the lord, his lady, and the falcons.

"Ne what hawkes sytten on perchen above,
Ne what houndes lyggen on the flour adoun."

³ *Quarterly Review*, LVI (1836), p. 7.

⁴ *Athenaeum*, July 30, 1910, p. 131.

The chamber probably had a window, that is, a hole in the wall which might be covered with a curtain or closed with a shutter, and perhaps a fireplace, for bedrooms had fireplaces before they were introduced into the hall.

The day began quite early, for breakfast was served at about six o'clock. In the romance of *Huon de Bordeaux* "one of the chief heroes is accused of laziness because he was still in bed after the cock had crowed." Dinner was served at ten in the morning and the evening meal at five. "Before the meal, each guest was served with water to wash. . . . At table the guests were not only placed in couples, but they also ate in couples, two being served with the same food and in the same plate. . . . Only certain articles were served in plates. Loaves were made of a secondary quality of flour and these were first pared and then cut into thick slices, which were called . . . *trenchers*. . . . The portions of the meat were served to the guests on these . . . and they cut it upon them as they ate it. The gravy, of course, went into the bread, which the guest sometimes . . . ate after the meat, but . . . it appears to have been more frequently sent away to the alms-basket."⁵

At table

Eating was apparently a serious business. The Countess of Pembroke offered her little household of sixteen "mackerel, conger, plaisir, raie, turbot, doreye, marlang, allec, mulvel, stockfiz, lus, troistes, piscis aquae dulcis, smelt, salmon, capri marini, haddock, sperling, gornard, solays, soles, flunders, perches, and lampronis" in the course of one week! A banquet reached Gargantuan proportions. A feast given to a newly consecrated Archbishop of York probably satisfied the guests, for it required "300 quarters of wheat, 300 tuns of ale, 100 tuns of wine, 1 pint of hypocras, 104 oxen, 6 wild bulls, 1,000 sheep, 304 calves, 304 swine, 400 fawns, 2,000 geese, 1,000 capons, 2,000 pigs, 400 plovers, 100 dozen quails, 200 dozen of the bird called 'rees,' 104 peacocks, 4,000 mallards and teals, 204 cranes, 204 kids, 2,000 chickens, 4,000 pigeons, 4,000 crays, 204 bitterns, 400 herons, 200 pheasants, 500 partridges, 400 wood-cocks, 100 curlews, 1,000 egrets, more than 500 stags, bucks and roes, 4,000 cold venison pasties, 1,000 'parted' dishes of jelly, 3,000 plain dishes of jelly, 4,000 cold baked tarts, 1,500 hot venison pasties, 2,000 hot custards, 608 pikes and breams, 12 porpoises and seals, with a proportionate quantity of spices, sugar delicacies, and wafers or cakes."

Menus

⁵ Wright, T., *A History of Domestic Manners*, ch. viii, *passim*.

Drink was not forgotten; the poor man drank his ale or beer, but the man of means preferred wine, of which he had many kinds from Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and even Greece. He was not only a drinker but a connoisseur of wine, which he thought "should be clear like the tears of a penitent, so that a man may see distinctly to the bottom of the glass; its color should represent the greenness of a buffalo's horn; when drunk it should descend impetuously like thunder; sweet-tasted as an almond; creeping like a squirrel; leaping like a roebuck; strong like the building of a Cistercian monastery; glittering like a spark of fire; subtle like the logic of the schools of Paris; delicate as fine silk and colder than crystal."

If society in the Middle Ages had liberal ideas as to food, it was rather particular when it came to table manners. Men (especially guests) might wear their hats at table, but etiquette or "curtasye" restricted their individuality in other respects:

Table manners

"On bothe halfe thy mouthe, iff that thou ete,
Mony a skorne shalle thou gete.
Thou shalle not laughe ne speke no thyng
Whille thi mouthe be fulle of mete or drynke;
Ne suppe not with grete sowndyng
Nother potage ne other thyng.
Let not thi spone stond on thy dysche,
Whether thou be served with fleshe or fische;
Ne lay hit not on thy dishe syde,
But clense hit honestly with-outen pride.

If thou spitt over the borde, or elles opon,
Thou shalle be holden an uncurtayse mon;

If thy nose thou clense, as may be falle,
Loke thy honde thou clense, as wythe-all,
Prively with skyrt do hit away,
Other ellis thurghe thi tepet that is so gay.
Clense not thi tethe at mete sittande,
With knife ne stre, styk ne wande.
While thou holdes mete in mouthe, be war
To drynke, that is an-honest char."⁶

When the meal was finished the men might settle down to some serious drinking interspersed with tales. The more gallant might accompany the ladies to their "dancing and caroling," for

⁶ The Babees Book, *The Boke of Curtasye*.

“ When they had dyned, as I you saye,
 Lordes and ladyes yede to playe;
 Some to tables [backgammon] and some to chesse,
 With other gamys, more or less.”

Ladies were even willing “ on the dyes to cast a chance.” If the weather permitted the garden was a favorite place for recreation, as it still is in England:

“ And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste
 Sche walkethe up and down wheer as hire liste;
 Sche gaderethe floures, partye whyte and reede,
 To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede,
 And as an angel hevenly sche song.”

The people of the Middle Ages were not without their amusements. If anything, they were better off in this respect than we “ progressives,” for they found it easy to amuse themselves and had a capacity for spontaneous enjoyment which is in danger of being lost in an age that patronizes artificial and professional sources of entertainment.

Diversions

The knight spent a great deal of his time in the exercise or practice of war. War, both private and “ public,” was almost a normal state of things and bore severely on the lower classes, for “ directly two nobles quarrel the poor man’s thatch goes up in flames.” But the military activities of the average knight could hardly be justified by the name of war. Battles were often fought purely as the result of an unexpected collision between two hostile forces, were contested with an astounding lack of intelligence, and, so far as the mounted arm was concerned, resolved themselves into a series of duels. Military science in the West was conspicuous by its absence; ignorance of geography, lack of supplies and a proper commissariat, and indifference to the merits of discipline made a definite plan of campaign difficult if not impossible. The only two creditable works on strategy, the *Strategicon* of the Emperor Maurice and the *Tactica* of Leo the Wise, were produced in the Eastern Empire. In one department, however, that of defense, the medieval warrior reached a high stage of proficiency of which he has left many interesting and picturesque examples. Famine or treachery were the greatest enemies of the castle and a siege generally subsided into a blockade. To capture his enemy and hold him for ransom was the usual ob-

*Military
science*

jective of the knight, and this was made the easier by the appalling amount of metal in which the warrior encased himself and which, if it gave him comparative immunity from the blows of weapons, rendered him helpless when unhorsed.

Jousting Since warfare was so largely a personal matter and offered such opportunity for individual prowess, the knight combined business and pleasure by indulging in sports which demanded a skill and a dexterity useful in combat. Most popular of all was the "joust," which made its appearance in the twelfth century, though something of the kind probably existed before. In the joust the participants, separated by a barrier running lengthwise along the course to prevent the horses from colliding, charged each other at full tilt. Wooden lances were used and the object was to strike the opponent "upon the front of his helmet, so as to beat him backwards from his horse, or to break the spear." The "tournament" was a more complicated affair in which an indefinite number arranged in "sides" were engaged and went through the evolutions employed in battles. Both jousts and tournaments were social events and attracted brilliant crowds. With a happy tact the ladies were appointed as judges, from whose decisions there was no appeal.

The tourney Less vigorous than these exercises of mimic warfare but still contributing to military efficiency were such pastimes as hunting, hawking, and racing:

"In somer at Whitsontyde,
Whan Knightes most on horseback ride,
Three miles the cours was then, . . ."

Hunting Gaston de Foix had sixteen hundred hounds in his kennels and six hundred horses in his stables. The stag and the wild boar were the favorite quarries. Hawking was a great delight with both sexes and the birds received almost incredible care. There is something fine in the attachment of the rough medieval knight for his falcon; he took it to church with him, it slept in his chamber, to part with it was a disgrace or a sacrifice of first significance. As characteristic of the Middle Ages as the monk or the church tower is the knight,

"haukyng by the ryver
With grey gos hawke in hande,"

and there is no exaggeration of sentiment in Boccaccio's finest tale. Then there was wrestling, which even the noble did not scorn; Chaucer's Sir Thopas was a man to avoid,

“ for over all ther he cam,
At wrastlyng he wolde have away the Ram.”

And there was tennis, “ goff,” and a primitive sort of “ rounders.”

Indoors society amused itself with chess (sometimes played for money!), backgammon (tables), draughts (or checkers), at least ten varieties of dicing games (in which the clergy joined), and, after the thirteenth century, cards (though St Bernard talks of a “ card-painter” in the eleventh). There were dances and “ caroles,” blind-man’s buff, medieval variants of “ ask me another,” charades, forfeits, tests of wit, and, of course, the minstrels and the jesters. Queen Matilda of England spent most of her fortune on poets and minstrels; and Raher, jester to her husband (Henry I), acquired a sufficient fortune to establish the most famous of London’s hospitals, St Bartholomew, or “ Barts.”

The position which woman occupies in society is often taken to indicate the degree of civilization reached by that society at any given time. It is difficult to know just what position she did occupy in the Middle Ages. Chivalry and the troubadours treated her with a reverence that hardly stopped short of deification, but William the Conqueror beat the lady who was to become his wife; the great preachers saw in her little but the embodiment of evil and the cause of man’s wretchedness, but Mary held a place in men’s hearts which rivaled that of Christ Himself. Woman’s position was far from ideal, but it was equally far from base servitude and, all things taken together, was probably very much on a par with that of her husband. She certainly appears better off in the *Chronicles of Froissart* than in the *Diaries of Evelyn* or *Samuel Pepys*.

To lay down a set of rules for the guidance of young women was a favorite exercise for medieval moralists. Girls are warned not to model themselves on the tortoise or the crane, “ which turn the visage and the head above their shoulders and wind their head like a vane,” but rather to be “ steadfast, in imitation of the beautiful hare, which always looks straight.” Naturally they must guard against over-chattering. They are constantly (and therefore ineffectually) warned against the folly of fashion, the use of mirrors, of stays, and devices to procure the illusion of slimness; they are reprimanded for plucking their eyebrows, for ridding themselves of

*Women in
society*

Deportment

superfluous hairs, for painting their faces, and for dyeing their hair. Gentlemen, and ladies too, preferred blondes in the Middle Ages, and Joinville concluded that the ugliness of the Saracens was due to their black hair. Hair received much attention, and a father ordered his daughters to "wasshe not the here of your hede in none other thinge but in lye and water. For ye shalle finde of miracles that hathe be done in the church of oure lady of Rochmadame, diverse tresses of ladies and gentile women that had be wasshe in wyne and in other things for to make the here of coloure other wise thanne God made it."⁷

Clothing

Clothing, of course, provided an ever-available target for the shafts of the satirist and the preacher. Berthold of Regensburg spared women as little as he spared shopmen. "In order that ye may compass men's praise ye spend all your labour on your garments — on your veils and your kirtles. Many of you pay as much to the sempstress as the cost of the cloth itself; it must have shields on the shoulders, it must be flounced and tucked all round the hem; it is not enough for you to show your pride in your very buttonholes, but you must also send your feet to Hell by special torments. Ye trot this way and that with your fine stitchings. Ye busy yourselves with your veils, ye twitch them hither, ye gild them here and there with gold thread; ye will spend a good six months' work on a single veil. . . . When thou shoulds't be busy in the house with something needful for thy good man, or for thyself or thy children, or thy guests, then art thou busy instead with thy hair, thou art careful whether thy sleeves sit well, or thy veil or thy headdress, wherewith thy whole time is filled."⁸

The husband

When moralists and satirists found such ready material in the luxurious vanity of women, it is hard to pity them as downtrodden and oppressed. Indeed, henpecked husbands were common and pathetic figures, poor browbeaten creatures whose wives when "thei see a lewde woman have a new guyse, they wille never leve cryeng on her husbondes unto they have the same, sayeng, 'why may not y have suche arraye as wel as she? am not y as welle born as she?' But she takithe none hede if her husbande hathe wherewith to pay for it, or hathe in his power to maintayne it. And thus, but she have it, her husbonde shal never be in pees with her." A wise old count advised his son that if he knew anything he wished to conceal

⁷ *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, ch. cxvii.

⁸ Coulton, *op. cit.*, III, 64.

to " tell it by no means to your wife, if you have one ; for if you let her know it, you will repent of it the first time you displease her."

But the medieval woman was not always frivolous or shrewish. In point of fact she was an extremely busy person whatever her position in society. There were many occupations open to her ; spinning and weaving, the care of the laundry, the dairy or the poultry ; she was employed in fieldwork, as a soap maker, candle maker, and weaver of baskets ; she enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the brewing industry and had a considerable interest in the bake-houses ; she was sometimes a vintner and often kept a tavern ; she was admitted into the guilds of the grocers and the goldsmiths ; she peddled fruit in the streets and kept a stall in the market ; she was a wool comber, a domestic maid, a companion, a usurer, and a proficient clipper of coins ; she was jealous of her rights and appeared in court as a plaintiff far more frequently than her descendants did six centuries later.

The busy woman

If she were a lady, even a great lady, her duties and responsibilities increased rather than diminished. Much of the business of estate management fell to her charge ; it was she who kept the servants to their duties and taught them to extinguish candles with their mouths or hands but " by no means with their shirts " ; she undertook the education of the young children and taught her maids to spin and weave ; she looked after the sick and the wounded and saw to it that the garden was planted with the proper medicinal herbs ; she superintended the crops, inspected the clothing for moths and the bedding for fleas, made sure of the winter stock of candles and salted meat, and kept an eye on the market prices. When her lord was away or had gone on Crusade she added military duties to her domestic responsibilities, and many a knight owed the preservation of his castle to the heroic defense made by his lady. It was gratitude as well as chivalry that made the author of the *Boke of Curtasye* say :

" Speke never un honestly of woman kynde,
 Ne let hit never renne in thy mynde ;
 The boke hym calles a chorle of chere,
 That vylany spekes be women sere ;
 For alle we ben of wymmen born,
 And oure fadurs us be-forne ;
 Therefore hit is an un honest thyng
 To speke of hem in any hethyng."

The manor

Infinitely beneath the condition of the noble was that of the peasant. The great mass of the population was still agrarian and lived in the straggling villages of the manors which formed the land units of the fief. Slavery had practically disappeared in Europe, but its place had been taken by serfdom, a status somewhat analogous to the old Roman *colonate*. The manor was the home of serfdom (which did not flourish in the towns) and consisted not only of the manor house or hall (where dwelt the knight or his agent) but the arable land attached to it and the village which housed the freemen and the serfs.

The cottages of the village were generally built in rows along the main street. They were often surrounded by a little garden-close and separated by "so far as a tame hen can go in a single flight, that is, about three hundred of a man's paces." Before the cottages, if the topography permitted, a wide meadow ran down to a pond or to the riverside and afforded both a hayfield and a feeding ground for the miscellaneous livestock of the inhabitants. The number of cottages was small, for villages of more than a hundred souls were the exception rather than the rule. The bulk of the cottages were built of wattle and thatch, intersticed with mud or clay, and so small that a Yorkshire prior could value three cottages at a total price of only one pound sterling (or about thirty-five dollars in pre-war currency?). They were as dark as they were small and with little other furniture than a stool or two and a board which could be placed on trestles to "set" a table. Piles of straw cast upon the dirt floor did service as beds. One room might suffice for man and beast, since animal heat was not a thing to be despised on winter nights.

" God wot a silly cote,
 Whose thatched sparres are furred with sluttish soote
 A whole inch thick, shining like Blackmoors' brows,
 Through smoke that down the headless barrel blows.
 At his beds-feete feeden his stalled teme;
 His swine beneath, his pullen ore the beame:
 A starved tenement . . ."

The manor house was appreciably better and after the thirteenth century was usually built of stone; but it was hardly more than a reasonably secure farmhouse, and as such it has survived, treated by time and history with a certain poetic and ironical justice, for many a serf who huddled in the "straw and wattle" could now chuckle over the fact that his descendants live in the manor or have turned

it into a barn and have built a more pretentious house for their own living.

The manor was, of course, agrarian; so much so that the best a good thirteenth century bishop could say of the peasants was that "they so till the earth, they are so utterly earthly, that we may say of them: they shall lick the earth and eat it." The fields were all cut up into plowed strips, or *selions* (roughly forty rods long and four rods wide), running helter-skelter across the ground, so that the land resembled in the "unprofitable variety of its surface, a tailor's book of patterns." The peasant of normal prosperity would possess some thirty of these strips, which were not contiguous but scattered hither and yon among the three fields into which the arable land was divided, the purpose being to give to each an equal share in the good land and the bad, in the near and the far. Again, the strips were not separated by any fencing but by a thin ribbon of unplowed land, called a *balk*. It is obvious that what was gained in impartiality was paid for in efficiency, for there was no protection against the weeds and thistles which might choke the plot of the lazy worker, nor could the prosperity of the community advance much more rapidly than the slowest of the laborers. Each of the three fields was allowed to lie fallow in rotation; the others were planted with wheat, rye, or barley.

For most of the land the peasant paid in money or in service, which was sometimes arduous and always annoying. It was generally the practice for the holders on customary tenure to work a specified number of days a week (the "day" was frequently a task of work and not a unit of time), usually two or three, upon the demesne land of the lord, which was also to be found, for the most part, scattered about the fields. In addition to the week-work there were *boondays*, upon which the peasants were expected to give their time to the lord's interests, at seedtime and harvest, for his land must be the first plowed and his hay must be made while the sun shone. The women and children worked at everything for which they could be utilized. Other services included cutting and carrying wood from the forest to the manor house; repair of the manor fences, roads, and bridges; perhaps beating a frog pond that the lady might not be disturbed at her lying-in, and in one case the search for snail shells that a medieval Penelope might wind her wool. The peasants were expected to take their grain to the lord's brewhouse, their cattle to the lord's bull, and their corn to the lord's mill, and for

The "open fields"

Land tenure

Services

each service to pay a fitting toll. The miller was notorious for his sharp practice:

“A theef he was, for-soth, of corn and mele,
And that a sly and usen for to stele.”

There were eggs to be submitted at Eastertide and a portion of all fish caught in the streams. The services were exacted in a rough proportion to the extent of the holdings; for example, “Godfrey of Boynton and those who owe the same service as he hold forty-four and a half acres . . . and owe for reap-silver a penny and half a farthing and render at Easter forty-four and a half eggs.”

Another annoying payment was the *heriot*, which in origin was the *her-geat* or war-apparatus with which the lord had invested his follower and which was returnable upon the recipient's death. In the course of centuries the term was applied, with a happy disregard for logic, to the personal possessions of the tenant, so that, upon his demise, and before the widow or son could inherit the cottage and the scattered *selions*, the lord demanded as a sort of inheritance tax the best head of cattle in the stalls of the deceased or, failing that, his best article of furniture. This was, by itself, a grievous burden and “the object of bitter opposition by peasants everywhere;” but then along came the Church and, upon the perhaps justifiable grounds that the dead man had missed up on his tithes or had underestimated them, claimed a belated compensation in the second best of the cattle or the furniture. When the cleric was also lord of the manor he recovered both the equipment of the God of War and the arrears due to the Prince of Peace.

To supervise the performance and collection of these varied services and dues the village had its officials in part appointed, in part chosen from the tenantry. Manorial officials were not popular. Chaucer's Reeve well knew

“ by the drought and by the reyne
The yeelding of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his cattle, his dayerie,
His swyn, his hors, his store and his poultrey,
Was wholly in this reeves governynge. . . .
Ther was ne baylyf, herde ne other kyne
That he knewe his sleight and his covyne;
They were adread of him as of the deth.”

The heriot

Order

Cases were tried in the manor court, which was held in the parish church, the hall, or under the most time-honored tree in the village.

Marriages might be made in Heaven but they were subject to the lord's approval. *Formariage*, or the marriage of tenants of different manors, required the payment of the *merchet*, since one of the lords lost an actual worker and an indefinite number of potential sources of profit. There were also forced marriages, and sympathy is perhaps due to the English peasant who "came on summons and was commanded to take Agatha of Halesowen to wife; he said he would rather be fined."

The amusements of the peasants were bucolic and rough. There were maypole dances in the churchyard and "ribald songs which the Church disliked," "ballads and dancings and evil and wanton songs and such-like lures of the Devil"; there was cockfighting, and wrestling, and throwing the bar, and fighting with quarter-staves. Football was very popular and the number engaged seems to have been limited only by the extent of the population.

The peasant may have been happier than the records go to show, for the chronicler and the poet of the Middle Ages scarce refer to him with kindness, almost invariably speak of him with contempt or, what is worse, do not mention him at all. What we know of him is not attractive and stands in sorry contrast to the splendid idealism of the Church and the gorgeous accomplishment of the cathedrals.⁹

Formariage

Amusements

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CHAPTER XXI

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE

THE Middle Ages, with all their roughness, were far from remaining in a state of intellectual stagnation, or even of intellectual darkness. There is not a generation from the sixth to the sixteenth century which failed to produce a man of scholarship. The formal education of children was not widespread nor was it available to any considerable number of the population, but there were schools for the young and the schools were attended. In Italy and southern France the schools of rhetoric survived the barbarian inroads and even the tradition of lay scholarship was kept alive. Fairly widespread were the parish schools, in which such children as might assist the priest were taught the elements of choral song, and others learned the Credo, the Paternoster, the Ten Commandments, and perhaps enough of reading to find their way through the Psalter. In the larger towns, especially in those possessing a cathedral, the schools were an important adjunct to the episcopal organization and provided valuable service in preparing young men for the priesthood or the clerical work of the diocese. The schools at Orléans, Chartres, and Paris became singularly famous. But all these were primarily for the instruction of men intending to enter the Church. Until the end of the twelfth century there were no schools for laymen as such.

The children of the nobility were naturally in the best position to receive education. A large estate generally had its own private chaplain who could give instruction to the sons of the lord and to such sons of his vassals as he chose to have with him. A knowledge of reading (both of Latin and the vernacular) was pretty general among the feudal classes, but writing was an occupation fit only for "clercs." The noble author dictated; even such distinguished poets as Walter von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach did not know how to write. The girls were often sent to a nunnery to acquire the rudiments of knowledge; that many could read is evidenced by the provision in an early German law code (the *Sachsen-spiegel*) that a girl should inherit the religious books of the family.

Education

*The training
of the children
of nobles*

A lengthy series of decrees prohibiting the nunneries from taking in girls for training shows the persistence of the practice.

As the guilds prospered, they established grammar schools where the children of the guild brethren could learn their "Three R's." The *Boke of Curtasye* warns the scholar to walk decorously to school, and medieval literature indicates that the schoolboy has been much the same in all ages. He looked forward to his vacations and threatened something like direct action if he didn't get them. For example:—

"O pro nobilis doctor. Now we youe pray,
Ut velitis concedere to gyff hus leff to play.
Nunc proponimus ire, without any ney,
Scolam dissolvere; I tell itt youe in fey,
Ergo nos rogamus, harty and holle,
Ut isto die possimus, to brek upe the scole."

Or this:

"I would my master were an hare,
And all his books houndes were
And I myself a jolly hunter;
To blow my horn I would not spare!
For if he were dead I would not care."

Chaucer's "litel clergeon" learned

"to singen and to rede,
And smale childer doon in hir childhede."

Indeed, in medieval England "in proportion to the population there were more schools at the beginning of the fourteenth century than at the end of the eighteenth."

Naturally, the great centers of education, outside of the monastic and the cathedral schools, were the universities; and the great educational change of the twelfth century was the "transfer of intellectual primacy from the monastic schools to those of the secular clergy." The word university is somewhat of an accident, for *universitas* was a term (meaning "all of us" or "all of you," etc.) applied indistinctly to any group or guild. Indeed a scholastic group was known as *universitas scholarium*, *universitas magistrorum*, or *universitas scholarium et magistrorum*, depending upon whether the controlling body was composed of the students (as at Bologna), the teachers, or a coalition of both. The *universitates* might develop from existent cathedral schools (as probably happened at Paris) or

from among the followers and disciples of some popular preacher (Oxford?).

Some of the universities were highly specialized; Bologna, although noted as a school of the liberal arts in the eleventh century, became a hundred years later the most famous law school in Europe. It was at Bologna that Irnerius gave the great stimulus to the revived study of Roman Law and the same university could claim Gratian, the "father of canon law." Here the *universitas* was the "student body," which kept the faculty under a discipline that a modern undergraduate might well envy. A professor could be fined if he appeared late for classes or lectured beyond the hour; he could not leave town without permission, but as a special favor he was permitted a day off for a honeymoon if he were sufficiently absent-minded to marry.

Salerno, probably the oldest university of the West, for its health resort and its doctors were famous as early as the tenth century, was exclusively a medical school. It was abolished by Napoleon in 1811. Orléans and Montpellier were noted for their law schools, although Montpellier had also a medical school of reputation. Toledo was criticized for its proficiency in the "Black Art." Germany was far behind the rest of Europe in establishing a university, for it was not until 1348 that one appears and even then it was at Prague!

Perhaps the two most famous of the universities were Paris and Oxford. Both specialized in theology. There were schools in Paris in the ninth century, but the city was not distinguished as an educational center until William of Champeaux (1070-1121) became "Master" of the Cathedral School. Later, the famous Peter Abelard (1079-1142) increased its renown. Many of the graduates remained in Paris and received licenses from the Chancellor of the Cathedral School to teach as masters. It was from this group that the University of Paris derived its origin. Its first charter was granted in 1200 by Philip Augustus. The origin of Oxford is more uncertain. That it was not created (although immensely helped) by a migration of discontented students from Paris seems certain from the fact that one Thedaldus Stampensis was teaching in Oxford in 1110 and there is mention of schools in the twelfth century. Cambridge dates from the thirteenth century.

The curricula of the various universities were much the same. In the *studium generale* (which meant a school accepting students from everywhere, not a school of "general studies") the basic work was

Trivium

and

Quadrivium

Difficulties

Discipline

in the Seven Liberal Arts, which were divided into the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*. The student began his advanced education with the *Trivium*; that is, the study of grammar (the Latin Classics, Virgil, Seneca, Horace, Terence, Juvenal, etc., and Donatus and Priscian the grammarians), rhetoric (the study of style and the use of tropes and figures of speech, as employed by Cicero, Quintilian, Victorinus, etc.), and dialectic (the art of talking about anything, acquired by a study of Porphyry and Aristotle). When that course had been completed he went on to the *Quadrivium*: geometry (which included a study of geography and the Ptolemaic system), arithmetic (including the necessary procedure for the computation of dates for Easter and other movable feasts), astronomy, and music (including choral song, harmonics and counterpoint). From the study of the *Quadrivium* the student passed on to the specialized faculties of law, medicine, or theology. At Paris, each of the four faculties was under a Dean, the four deans were under a rector, the rector controlled by occasional meetings of a general assembly.

The instruction given at the universities was of an intensely personal kind. The lack of books in general and of textbooks in particular compelled the adoption of the lecture-system, which can be (and often is) a depressing process. Commentaries or commentaries on commentaries were preferred to original texts until the textual improvements begun by Fichet in the fifteenth century. The lecture rooms were often cold and dark; it could have been no easy task to take down word for word the wisdom of the master and of doubtful stimulation to learn one's copy by rote, the only method possible in the absence of books. It is small wonder that but few completed the course or that the majority of those who did did not continue their studies and qualify as masters.

Discipline at the universities was of the loosest kind. Since the students came under the direct protection of the Church they enjoyed a general immunity from the jurisdiction of the city magistrates. This encouraged both abuse in the students and resentment from the citizens, and conflicts between "town" and "gown" were shamefully frequent. The practice of dividing the student body into "nations"—Paris, for example, had four: France, Picardy, Normandy, and England (Germany)—added "international" rivalries to the usual disciplinary problems. Nor could the university exercise much control over the student. As a rule he paid his fees directly to his master, and, of course, there was nothing to prevent

him from packing up at any time and going off to another university to take his notes from a master of greater or more recent fame. With the student went a part of the master's income, a practice for which (assuming the intellectual honesty of the student) there is much to be said.

Just as the most skillful fingers employed in the arts found their chief media in religious subjects, so did theology provide the most fertile field for the activity of the man of intellect. The scholars of the Middle Ages did not pursue knowledge for its own sake nor were they seekers after absolute truth; to the great bulk of them, at least, truth lay inherent in the Church and its teachings, and their efforts were limited to the demonstration of the truth of the Christian religion by the application of human reason. Hence the great emphasis placed upon logic and rhetoric and the failure of philosophy to be regarded as anything more than the handmaiden (although to be sure the most favored) of theology. Knowledge was valuable only in so far as it revealed or helped to reveal the mysteries of the Divine Plan. By itself it was valueless, even harmful; for its possession was a temptation to pride or, what was worse, doubt.

Theology

The intellectual activity which centered about theology was known as "scholasticism" and its devotees were called "scholastics." Scholasticism, like so many other terms, has been so loosely used that it is doubtful whether it means a school of thought or a scholastic method; it may include both. Whatever it was, it owed its peculiar vigor to the stimulus of the controversy between the nominalists and the realists and the temporary triumph of the latter. The occasion for the rise of these two groups was the somewhat tardy uncertainty which arose concerning the real significance of the mystery of the Mass.

Scholasticism

For centuries the doctrine of transubstantiation, that is, the doctrine that at a given point in the service of the Mass the bread and wine is transmuted into the body and blood of Christ, had been accepted by Christians without comment and without explanation. But in the ninth century Radbertus, a French monk, without questioning the doctrine itself, attempted to discover whether the change were an actual and physical one or merely spiritual. Radbertus decided that there was an actual change of *substance*, while at the same time the *accidents*, that is, those

Transubstantiation

Radbertus

qualities by which our senses perceive them, remained the same.¹ This interpretation produced a considerable amount of opposition from men who regarded the change as a purely spiritual one; "otherwise there would be no room for the exercise of faith." The Church, however, adopted and has ever since retained the position of Radbertus.

The controversy over transubstantiation was ended, but the method by which Radbertus had reached his conclusions did not meet with so ready acceptance. In the eleventh century Berengar of Tours denied the validity of the philosophic concepts of *accidents* and *substance* and was supported (philosophically) by Roscellinus of Paris. The intellects of the Middle Ages were obsessed (and quite reasonably) with the problem of "universals," and men gravitated into one of three schools. The champions of Realism defended the proposition that *Universalia sunt ante rem*; that is to say, that general ideas and concepts precede concrete things, both in rank and in causality, and that individual objects are but the reflections or illustrations of the reality, the idea itself. A more moderate group maintained that *Universalia sunt in re*—that concepts are inherent in, and inseparable from, particular objects. The Nominalists, on the other hand, insisted that *Universalia sunt post rem*—in other words, that general ideas are formulated by the exercise of the intellect using the concrete object as its material. The leader of the Realists was Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), whose "intellectual principle was that faith must precede knowledge." In his famous doctrine: "non quero intelligere ut credam; sed credo ut intelligam," he has summed up the scholastic method. The triumph of the Realists saved the doctrines of the Church, for they were no longer ideas but actualities and truths. So long as the scholar put (and kept) one point of his dialectic compass within the uncontested field of dogma, there was no limit to his radius and the Church would not interfere with his speculations. But let him doubt the validity of a dogma, he at once risked the consequences of heresy.

The complacency of the triumphant Realists was rudely shaken by the impudence of Peter Abelard who, without attacking the accepted dogmas of the Church, had the temerity to advocate a new approach to knowledge. Abelard (1079–1142), the lover and beloved of Heloise, the subtle master of the dialectic of the *Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian*, had an inquiring mind

Berengar of Tours

Roscellinus

The problem of Universals

Anselm of Canterbury

Abelard

¹ Emerton, E., *Medieval Europe*, p. 441.

which led him to assert the necessity of private judgment and of avoiding a blind reliance upon authority. "By doubting we are led to inquire; by inquiring we perceive the truth." In his *Sic et Non* (*Yes and No*) he collected the apparently contradictory views of the Church Fathers upon various subjects, tactfully reserving his own judgment. When, for example, in answer to the proposition — "That it is necessary to believe in One God" — Abelard arranged a series of citations from the Scriptures and the early Fathers in support of the affirmative, only to follow it up with an equally imposing series *et contra* (on the other hand), the Church could be excused for finding this method dangerous.

But the *Sic et Non* revealed the perils that could lie in wait for the unwary student who, confused by a conflict of authority, might wander into the paths of heresy. So Peter Lombard harmonized the discord of authority upon fundamentals, and his book, the *Sentences*, became, with Jerome's *Vulgate*, a basic text in theology and the agent which crystallized the number of Sacraments into seven.

Sic et Non

Abelard's method influenced another serious student who became famous, though in a contrary direction; Arnold of Brescia applied the method of inquiry to the government of Rome and the institutions of the Church. His researches led him to undertake a reformation and his efforts at reformation brought him to the stake, or the gallows.

Scholasticism reached its fullest bloom in the thirteenth century when the Dominican and Franciscan Orders began to invade the universities in overwhelming numbers. The greatest names in scholasticism belong to members of the Mendicant Orders: Alexander of Hales, the "Irrefragable Doctor" (Franciscan); Albertus Magnus, naturalist, encyclopedist, and philosopher (Dominican); Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic Doctor," whose monumental treatise, the *Summa Theologiae*, is the authoritative work on Catholic dogma (Dominican); Bonaventura the mystic (Franciscan); and Duns Scotus, the "Subtle Doctor," who stretched the fine hairs of dialectic almost to the breaking point and whose name has acquired a most strange and unwarranted immortality in the English "Dunce" (Franciscan).

*Scholasticism
and the
Mendicants*

The greatest contribution of scholasticism was the reconciliation of pagan philosophy to the principles of the Christian Faith. As late as the twelfth century Aristotle was known, in the West, only through Boethius' translation of the *De Interpretatione*, his abridg-

ment of the *Categories* and his commentary on the *Organon*. But by the twelfth century Latin translations of the *Natural Philosophy*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and the *De Anima* had been made from Arabian commentaries or, after the Frankish conquest of Constantinople (1204) in the Fourth Crusade, directly from the Greek. The most influential of the Arabian scholars was Averroës, but Averroës was committed to two Aristotelian principles — the eternity of matter and the unity of the intellect — which were embarrassing to the orthodox Christian, for the one affected the personality of God, the other questioned the personal immortality of the soul. This peril led Pope Gregory IX to forbid the teaching of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* in the faculty of arts at Paris (1255).

In 1261 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) undertook the double task of translating Aristotle into Latin and of continuing the work of Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), who had done his best to make a Christian out of Aristotle. Thomas succeeded so well that the Averroists (particularly Siger of Brabant) complained that Aristotle was no longer Aristotle. The interest in this Aristotelian problem lies in the fact that the scholastics were dedicated to the task of using philosophy to demonstrate the truths of theology. This is clearly attempted in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*.

But Aristotle refused to be reconciled at every point with the Christian Faith, especially upon such vital matters as the Creation and the immortality of the soul. Duns Scotus attacked the *proofs* upon which Aquinas had relied, and by so doing showed that philosophy, like any handmaiden, was incapable of giving complete satisfaction and might even have a mind of her own. Scotus was followed by William of Occam, a kind of Neo-nominalist, who stated that human certitude is limited to the perception of particular objects, or at best to a proposition which *must* follow from a previously demonstrated proposition. In consequence, metaphysics and rationalized theology are hardly more than (very worthy) mental exercises. The result of the positions taken by Scotus and Occam was a more definite separation of philosophy and theology, and with their separation scholasticism, as such, ceased to dominate the intelligentsia of Europe.

The separation of philosophy and theology had far-reaching results, since both had their devotees. The theologians either continued the Thomastic method and attempted to derive rational

verities from the meager store of evident principles, and by ever severer logic to chain reason to faith, which

“is as high
As metaphysic wit can fly,”

or else they forsook the *quiddities* and the tyranny of the *paulo-post-futurum*, and sought their ecstasy in mysticism. The mystics were numerous and influential, especially in the Rhineland, where emerged the Beghards, Beguinnes, the Brethren of the Common Life, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and such attractive figures as John Eckhart, John Ruysbroeck, Gerard Groote, and the unknown author of the *Imitation of Christ* (attributed to Thomas à Kempis).

Those who favored philosophy (without, of course, challenging the tenets of theology) were equally productive and of greater influence. Roger Bacon (1214-1292) tempered a mystical explanation of knowledge (as the revelation of Divine Wisdom to the human spirit by the intervention of an acting principle identical with the Divine Logos) with the easier statement that all our *evidence* is bestowed by *reason* and completed by *experience*. This isn't much, but it is on this that later enthusiasts have hailed Bacon as the “Father of Positive Science.”

William of Occam really did more, for it was the Occamist, John Buridan, who entered the lists with Aristotle, and whose ideas upon “motion” and “impetus” and the acceleration of falling bodies eased the way to the modern science of dynamics. The Occamist, Albert of Saxe, described the constant shifting of the earth's center of gravity, and Nicholas of Oresme blazed the trail for Galileo and Copernicus, for in his *On Heaven and Earth* he questioned the old geocentric theory, talked intelligently of centrifugal forces, and posited the theory that the earth moved about the universe harmoniously with the other spheres.

The border line between magic and science was not too clearly drawn, and it is sometimes difficult to tell where the one leaves off and the other begins. The study of magic (which can be a most honest and serious one) is one of the oldest of human interests and is to be connected with the “pastoral star-watchers of the Babylonian plains, with the wisdom of the Chaldeans and the unfathomed

*Magic and
science*

learning of older Egypt." So far as Christian "magic" is concerned there was very little of conscious charlatanry about it, for it rested upon a very definite hypothesis: the conviction that there existed an "all-penetrating, all-environing and all-transmuting force circulating in currents and concentrating at given points." These points of concentration included the planets, a diversity of animals, plants, metals, and stones. This force could be controlled solely by the human will and then only by those "trained in the knowledge of the nature and laws of this current, and who by abstinence and self-mastery had attained isolation from all exterior currents."² The disciples of magic had in view two highly justifiable objects in their attempt to command this force: the prediction and the control of the future. The Church did not interfere with the magicians provided that they did not call upon the spirits of the Infernal World to help them or, by a careless assertion of their laws, attack the orthodox doctrine of free will.

Closely allied to magic were the studies of astrology and alchemy. Both had pretenses toward scientific investigation and both exercised considerable influence upon the men of science. Astrology attempted to discover the exact amount of influence exerted by the heavenly bodies upon the health and general welfare of man. It was obvious that the sun and the moon affected both plant and animal life, and if they, why not Venus, Mercury, Saturn, and the rest? The "science" developed rapidly, horoscopes were cast at the birth of princes, and even popes did not scorn to consult the astrologers. Doctors were so convinced of a direct connection between the position of the planets and bodily infirmities that consultation of the stars became nearly as much a part of medical practice as urine analysis.

Alchemy was another "scientific" study gone adrift, and its history "is one long mystification." It too relied upon the hypothesis of an all-pervading force and believed in planetary influences, connecting lead with Saturn, tin with Jupiter, iron with Mars, copper with Venus, and quicksilver (as we do) with Mercury. The chief object of the alchemists was the production of gold and silver and the discovery of *elixir vitæ* (elixir of life), which after all was only potable gold. Indeed, the very word chemistry (which may have been an old name for the Nile country) was defined by Suidas in the eleventh century as "the art of making gold and silver."

Astrology

Alchemy

² *Edinburgh Review*, CC (1904), p. 94.

There was something very modern (and also very ancient) in the hypothesis which stimulated their investigations. They believed (with Empedocles) in the existence of a *materia prima* or fundamental substance from which all things are made by the addition of various quantities of the four "elements," earth, air, fire, and water, which in turn represented the four qualities of aridity, cold, heat, and moisture. So long as the *substance* was immutable, it seemed not impossible to transmute any object into any other object by readjusting the elements; for example, lead into gold (a "miracle" which has been performed in our own day). The Roman Emperor Caligula was the first alchemist to attempt this transmutation when he caused orpiment to be calcined to form trisulphide of arsenic and gave the world "king's yellow." The search for an elixir of life goes back to Democritus of Abdera. Alchemy flourished throughout the Middle Ages and was undoubtedly more influential than has yet been suspected. Unmistakable signs and symbols employed exclusively by alchemy have found a place in the sculptural details of Westminster Abbey, and *The Triumphal Car of Antimony* written by Basilius Valentinus, in which antimony is mentioned as being used internally, has recently been suggested as inaugurating the chemistry of Medicine.

The infinite superiority of Heaven did not entirely prevent men from investigating the world about them. Geographic knowledge was slight, to be sure, but it was a great deal sounder than is generally believed. During the centuries of the barbarian invasions, when great portions of the Empire were lost and the world was in confusion, trade and travel, the greatest contributors to geographical knowledge, declined and with them disappeared the interest in strange peoples and places. The Church contributed to the growing ignorance by its support of the Book of Genesis, which could not be reconciled with the work of the greatest of the ancient geographers, Claudius Ptolemy. Both Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville described the earth as a flat disk.

Geographic knowledge

But this state of ignorance was of short duration. Trade revived and the lure of the Holy Land resulted in a creditable number of pilgrimages. Cosmas "Indicopleustes," an Egyptian monk of the sixth century, wrote a *Christian Topography of the World* which

presumes a knowledge of Asia and the existence of the Pacific Ocean. "The Anglo-Saxon scholars understood perfectly well that the earth was a globe. They considered it to be the centre of the firmament, which they imagined to be an immense concave surface, on which the stars were in some way attached. Two stars, the North polar star and the South polar star, directly opposite to each other, were the axles upon which the firmament turned its endless round." In *Ælfric's Manual of Astronomy* the "firmament is always turning round about us, *under* this earth and above, and there is an in-calculable space between it and the earth. Four-and-twenty hours have passed, that is, one day and one night, before it is once turned round and all the stars which are fixed in it turn round with it."⁸ The Venerable Bede in his *On the Nature of Things* repeated many of these ideas, and Bede was one of the most widely read of medieval writers. In the ninth century the Irish monk, Dicuil, gathered and published some information received from "clerks who had sailed among the northern islands of Scotland and had even reached Thule or Iceland about the year 795."

So it went from century to century, each generation adding a bit to the knowledge already possessed and no one going back to the "flat" theories of Cassiodorus and Isidore. The Arabs began their contributions to the literature of geography in the tenth century. They were particularly well favored, for Islam stretched from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas, the interimperial trade was immense, and the Koran had prescribed a pilgrimage to Mecca as "one of the five pillars of the practical observance of the faith." In the eleventh century Adam of Bremen not only confirmed the rotundity of the earth by referring to the earth's axis, but wrote of the geography of Northern Europe and the Western Sea. Edrisi at the court of Roger of Sicily and William of Conches at that of Geoffrey Plantagenet continued the work in the twelfth century. In the thirteenth, Albertus Magnus reported that climatic conditions varied with differences in latitude and Roger Bacon described the effect upon the climate of the sun's passage along the ecliptic.

This century also witnessed a distinct increase in direct communication between Europe and China as a result of the Tartar conquests, which opened the roads to India and the Far East. Tartar ambassadors were received at Paris and London (1289), and the famous Polo family began its historic travels. Travel books and "Itiner-

Ælfric

Bede

Adam of Bremen

Travel to the Far East

⁸ Wright, T., *Essays on Archaeological Subjects*, II, ch. i.

ries" became more numerous, of which the most influential were those of Marco Polo, Oderic of Pordenone, Sir John Mandeville (a spurious but very popular book in which the rotundity of the earth is clearly set forth [1370]: "And right as the schipmen taken here [i.e., in Europe] avys here and governe hem be the lode sterre, right so don schipmen beyonde tho parties [i.e., in his 'yle of Lamary'] be the sterre of the southe, the whiche sterre apperethe not to us. And this sterre that is toward the northe, that wee clepen the lode sterre, ne appereth not to hem. For whiche cause, man may wel perceyve that the lond and the see ben of rownde schapp and forme."), and of Peter d'Ailly (whose books, the *Treatise on the Shape of the World* and the *Compendium of Cosmography*, were used by Columbus).

*The rotundity
of the world*

Map drawing seems to have lagged behind the actual knowledge available. In almost every map until the fifteenth century Jerusalem was put in the exact center, and this practice "rather naturally implied a circular circumference" which is the most usual form of the maps, although the world shaped like a T is often met with. Religion strongly influenced the cartographer; Paradise was located to the extreme east of Asia and is carefully delineated with the garden, the tree, and its first and only human occupants.

Maps

Other branches of science had their adherents. Mathematics owed a great deal to Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II) in the tenth century and to Leonard of Pisa in the thirteenth. The abacus (or table for arithmetical calculation) was mentioned but not described by Boethius; it was Gerbert who effectively introduced it into the West and prepared a system of rules for its employment. His disciple, Richerius, writes that Gerbert constructed a mechanical device consisting of twenty-seven longitudinal columns, "and he also caused to be made one thousand characters in horn, of the figures of the nine numerical symbols by means of which he was able to express all numbers and make all calculations." "The object of the abacus-machine of Gerbert was, by means of its columns, to represent what we now call the value of numerals by position. . . . The nine numbers were represented by the following apparently arbitrary figures to which were given the names: *igin*, *andras*, *ormis*, *arbas*, *quinas*, *calcus*, *zenis*, *temenias*, and *celentis*. Each of these had a local power, ac-

Mathematics

The abacus

cording to the column in which it was placed; thus *andras* in the first column represented 2, in the second, 20 and in the third 200, etc. . . . The results, however, were always expressed in Roman numerals."

By the twelfth century the abacus was falling into disuse and mathematicians were giving "independent value of position to the characters, although they had not yet come to regard them as numerals. They now found it necessary to denote in some manner what in the tabular process was represented by leaving the place blank; and they invented for this purpose a new (i.e., a *tenth*) character, represented by a circle, to which they gave the name *siphos* or *ciphos*. It was not until a later period when the characters had long been regarded as numerals that their original names were dropped."⁴ "Cypher," of course, still persisted. It remained for Leonard of Pisa to simplify the whole study of mathematics by the introduction of the "so-called Arabic numerals, which were really derived from the Hindus by the Arabs." "This was probably the greatest improvement in writing made since the invention of the phonetic alphabet, for the new figures could be written in much less time than the clumsy Roman numerals and were far handier in written reckoning than any previous system."

Physics made practical contributions in the invention of mirrors, lenses, and mechanical clocks; Adelard of Bath knew something about atmospheric pressures, and Nemorarius "wrote an important work on weights and falling bodies." Natural history, as always, attracted the serious and satisfied the gullible. Bartholomeus Anglicus was observant enough when it came to cats, for to him "The catte is a beaste of uncertain heare and colour; for some catte is white, some rede, some blacke, some skewed and speckled in the fete and in the face and in the eares. And he is . . . in youth swyfte, playnt, and mery, and lepeth and reseth on all thyng that is tofore him; and is led by a strawe and playeth therwith. And is a right hevy beast in age, and ful sleepy, and lieth slily in wait for myce . . . and when he taketh a mous he playeth therwith, and eateth him after the play . . . and he maketh a ruthefull noyse and gastfull when one proffereth to fyghte with another." But stranger beasts received stranger traits: "The lion stands on a hill. If he hears a man hunting or scents him approaching, in fleeing he

⁴ Wright, T., *Essays on Archaeological Subjects*, II, pp. 63-68.

erases his track on the ground with his tail, and thus escapes to his den where he may rest in safety. When the cub is just born, he stirs not until the sun has thrice shone about him, then his father rouseth him with his cries. The lion sleeps with his eyes open."⁵ But the travelers of the eighteenth century were equally exuberant in their descriptions, and the hoop snake and the quill-throwing porcupine still have their believers.

Medicine, in common with the other pursuits, fluctuated between science and superstition. Their experience at the Universities of Salerno and Montpellier, coupled with daily contact with disease, gave the doctors much practical knowledge. The main authorities were still Galen and Hippocrates, but specialized works on many subjects were available. But the medieval conviction in the four basic elements pervaded medicine as well as the other sciences, and produced the four essentials: black and yellow gall, phlegm, and blood. A proper arrangement of these "humours" was essential to perfect health. Physical infirmity was, therefore, attributed to the dominance of one or another of the four, and in consequence a man became choleric, melancholy, phlegmatic, or sanguine as the case might be. Drugs of many kinds (e.g., opium, hemlock, etc.) were employed, surgical patients were given sponges soaked with mandrake to breathe, and the use of something called *lethargos* suggests the possibility of an anaesthetic. Hospitals, in proportion to the population, were as numerous as they were in the nineteenth century, and many cities maintained a health department. Guy of Chauliac wrote an authoritative work on surgery (*Chirurgia Magna*), and Peter of Abano suspected the circulation of the blood. Plagues, distressingly frequent, taught the physicians the value of isolating contagious diseases and of prescribing a "way of life" that the healthy ones be not affected: "First of all, let all men, women and children avoide out of the evyll ayre into a good soyle and then, according to their age, strength of nature and complexion, let every one of them with some good medicine draine from the bodie superfluous moysture, and diminish humour, hotte and drie and use the regiment of diet to drying. . . . Music is good in this case and pleasant tales. . . . Forget not to keepe the chamber and clothing cleane, no Privies at hand, a softe fire with perfumes in the mornyng. Shifte the lodging often time, and close in the Southeaste windows,

Medicine

Hygiene

⁵ Morris, R., *An Old English Miscellany*.

specially in the tyme of mistes, cloudes and windes; and use to smell upon some pleasaunt perfume, and bee letten bloud a littel at once, and to take Pilles, *contra pestem.*"⁶

But there was also much superstition and some downright chicanery in the exercise of medical practice. The patient was, above all else, to be impressed or confused by the free use of technical jargon. Arnold of Villanova gave the following advice to consulting physicians: "If you do not know what is the matter, say that the patient is suffering from obstruction of the liver. Be sure to use the word 'obstruction'; for they don't understand it and it is often exceedingly useful that people should not understand what you say." More honest if not more helpful were the *nostrums* seriously recommended and confidently tried. In the event of a nosebleed, "heat egges shales to powder and sift them through a linnen cloth and blew them into hys nose: if the shales were of egges whereout yonge chickens are hatched it were so much the better." For a sore eye, "take the right eye of a frogg, lap it in a peece of russet cloth and hang it about the neck; it cureth the right eye if it be enflamed or bleared." "A baked toad hung in a silk bag about the neck was much esteemed; the Fourth Book of the Iliad placed under the head cured the quartan ague, the word *ananazipta* scrawled upon parchment (and then applied) cooled the fever; *abracadabra* chased away the ague, an hexameter from the Iliad allayed the agony of gout and the rheumatism yielded to a verse of the *Lamentations.*"

Nostrums

Law

"The Middle Ages . . . were ages of legal growth, ages in which the idea of right, as embodied in the law was the leading idea of statesmen, and the idea of rights justified or justifiable by the letter of the law, was a profound influence with politicians. . . . There was no fear of shedding blood, but there was great fear of destroying right . . . something that may be justified by law, not merely by the logic of the strong hand."⁷ It is one of the most common of the many misconceptions concerning the Middle Ages to regard that period as one in which might alone made right. There was law and plenty of it, possibly too much or too many different kinds. There was Roman law and canon law, feudal law, tribal customs with the

⁶ Bullein, W., *A Dialogue against the Fever Pestilence*.

⁷ Carlyle, A. J., *Medieval Thought in the West*, V, part iii, ch. ii.

force of law, and local enactments. More than one of these could affect any individual and all of them might be operative in a given district.

Many of the principles of Roman law had been adopted by the barbarians, all of their legal codes (except that of the Anglo-Saxons) were written in Latin, and the *Capitularies* of the French kings were Roman in language and to some extent in spirit. The rudiments of Roman law were kept alive in the study of dialectic in the *Trivium*. The capture of medieval society by feudalism, with its emphasis upon land and its encouragement of local jurisdiction, tended to give to law a *territorial* character which was lacking in the Roman system. In other words, whereas Roman law provided a different *jus* for different persons, feudalism required the *same* law to be administered throughout a given feudal area. In consequence, the study and influence of Roman law (particularly in France and Germany) declined from the ninth to the eleventh century although it did not disappear. The second half of the eleventh century witnessed a great revival of the study of Roman law, especially as a result of the work of Irnerius at the University of Bologna and the recognition by the Holy Roman Emperors of the value of Roman law in the furtherance of their political claims. Once revived it continued to be a favorite subject at the universities and offered to those proficient in its mysteries many opportunities of lucrative or influential positions at the courts of kings and nobles.

Canon law, or the body of law governing the Church and its members, was, in part, an offshoot of Roman law, since the very legalization of Christianity was to be found in an imperial edict and for several centuries the Empire legislated for the Church. Canon law was derived from rules to be found in the Old and New Testaments, from the customs and traditions of the early Church, from the writings of the "Fathers," from the canons passed at councils, and from the decretals of popes. A compilation of the various rules which went to make up the whole body of the law was first attempted in the seventh century by Dionysius Exiguus. This was reissued, with the addition of thirty-nine papal decretals, in 774 by Pope Hadrian and is therefore known as the *Dionysio-Hadriana*. A Spanish collection, the *Hispana*, dating from early in the eighth century, was used by some unknown Frenchman (or Frenchmen) to concoct the "Forged Decretals" which were recognized as official by Pope Nicholas I. In the eleventh century Burchard of Worms compiled

*Modification
of Roman law*

*Revived
study of
Roman law*

Canon law

Codes

his *Decretorum Libri XX*, and Ivo of Chartres (c. 1115) published three additional treatises on the subject. All of these earlier efforts were superseded between 1141 and 1150 by Gratian (another distinguished product of Bologna) and his *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum* (*Harmony of Discordant Canons*), better known as the *Decretum*, which remained the classical treatise on canon law until it was revised by the Council of Trent. Only a few further attempts were made at codification after the time of Gratian and these were in the nature of *addenda*. Gregory IX issued a compilation known as the *Extra* or *X*, incorporating the decretals since 1150; Boniface VIII in his *Sextus* brought it up to date (1298); Clement V did the same in his *Clementinæ*, and John XXII produced the last of the compilations in the *Extravagantes*.

Wide scope of canon law Canon law played a most important part in the life of the Middle Ages; it not only set forth the organization of the Church and the duties of its members, but it was the chief source of the claims of papal supremacy and the authority used by the Church in its attempt to control, or at least to become independent of, the State. Further, it affected, sometimes vitally, a very large proportion of the men, women, and children of Christendom, for ecclesiastical jurisdiction was far-reaching by reason either of persons or causes. Naturally, it included all the clergy, regular and secular, and all scholars who wished to enjoy "benefit of clergy," and it took under its protection the widow and the orphan. Its spiritual jurisdiction embraced all matters connected with the sacraments, the taking of vows (irrespective of the object), ecclesiastical discipline, and matters of faith (heresy, schism, apostasy). In civil matters it dealt with such everyday cases as marriage and divorce, adultery, the legitimacy of children, conditions attendant upon the granting of benefices or alms, disputes over ecclesiastical property, the payment of tithes, and the probating of wills. Criminal cases also came before it in the event of a charge of sacrilege, blasphemy, acts of violence committed on consecrated ground, or direct infraction of a Church decree (e.g., the practice of usury or the violation of the Truce of God).

Penalties The penalties which gave sanction to canon law were varied; fines and penances were imposed, pilgrimages or the performance of a good work were ordered, imprisonment was decreed, and in extreme cases the dreaded ban of excommunication was passed. If a town or other territorial area were disobedient, the offending dis-

trict could be put under an "interdict" which put an end to every religious service in the affected zone. In an age when salvation could be obtained only through the administration of the sacraments, interdict and excommunication were things to be avoided.

The violence of the Middle Ages was not due to the lack of law but the inability to enforce it, a condition faced by modern as well as by medieval society. A police force of sorts existed in the "city watch," but the members were liable to be elderly and such as had outlived their time of other useful service. In England every youth above the age of twelve was expected to take such an oath as: "I will not be a thief nor the fellow of a thief, nor will I conceal a theft nor a thief but will reveal it to those to whom it should be revealed." But in general, the discovery of a crime was fortuitous, its prosecution dependent upon personal interest, and the decision a matter of judicial probity.

"And loke ye ryng wele in your purs,
ffor ellys your cawse may sped the wurs."

In whatever light other aspects of the Middle Ages may appear to modern eyes, "one feature of mediaeval civilization can bid defiance to disparagement. It has no seamy side; outside or inside it is equally honest, equally beautiful. Its foundations are as solid as its aspirations are lofty. It is mediaeval art."⁸ The medieval cathedral is the very embodiment of medieval life and medieval civilization. No type of building in any age before or since has caught more than a part of the spirit of the people who built it; the cathedral caught it all — nay more, caught it and held it for all men to know. In the glory of its windows and the music of its bells; in the lights and shades of the nave, the aisles and transepts; in the quiet of the ambulatory; in the grandeur of its design; in the aspiration of its lofty towers and pillars; in the lightness of its tracery; in the serenity of its statues and the horror and the mockery and the happiness of its gargoyles and sculptured figures; in the brilliance of its painted walls and the somberness of the crypt, it is medievalism turned to stone and glass. There is quiet mysticism and gossiping superstition, fervor and matter-of-factness, conviction and uncertainty, hope and fear, joy and pathos,

Police

Architecture

⁸ Thorndike, L., *A Short History of Civilization*, p. 352.

love and hate, in short everything that was part of the spiritual life of men and women. The cathedral was theirs and God's, for their use and for His worship. Nothing seems superfluous, nothing lacking; it remains an organic whole, a thing of wonder and of perfect rhythm, evidence enough that "productive work may be counted all joy, and that manual arts spring like drama and music from the hearts of the common people and reveal the tender beauty of that which comes fresh from the folk-mind."⁹ The artists of the Middle Ages were workmen and the workmen artists.

Medieval architecture reached its highest development at the hands of the builders of northern France who overcame the restrictions of the round arch of the Romanesque style and so produced the "Gothic." The pointing of the arch, attained by the use of ribbed vaulting which conveniently concentrated the strain at a limited number of points along the side walls, and the employment of the flying buttress to carry the strain to the sturdy outer walls removed the limitations of height, permitting the adoption of the perpendicular instead of the horizontal in the fundamental lines and so conveying the restless spirit of energetic aspiration which is characteristic of medieval architecture. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, originality gave way to standardization and technical perfection. Higher and higher reached the nave, lighter and lighter became the side walls, until in the Sainte-Chapelle a veritable lantern of stone had been constructed. In some ways the cathedral of the Middle Ages can never be known to us; its stones were sharp-cut and white and not gray and molded by time; its walls shone with color and the gray statues before the portals, around the walls, and on the roofs were brilliant in paint and gilt.

Sculpture was not yet divorced from architecture, and the statues of the cathedral were the representations of deathless humanity and as such "take on life and carry on veritable dialogues, and their features express the whole gamut of human feeling from perfect serenity to subtle irony or jovial conviviality." After the thirteenth century there was a marked decline in cathedral building, and men began to carve statues as independent units. With this development there is a marked tendency for the statues to lose somewhat of their heroic size and to change the accepted raiment of Heaven for the variant costumes of the workaday world; the earlier Christ "lofty and serene becomes the Man of Sorrows, and the Virgin is a simple

⁹ *Legacy of the Middle Ages*, p. 90 and *passim* (ch. ii).

housewife or a peasant woman dandling or suckling a quite ordinary babe.”¹⁰

Religion did not completely monopolize the art of the Middle Ages. There was gorgeous work done by the goldsmiths and silversmiths, by the leather workers and the carvers of wood. In the production of tapestries the Middle Ages is unsurpassed, for it understood the purpose of tapestries, that they were intended primarily to fill up a wall and so must themselves be filled in with infinite details; it saw the folly of using half-tones or broken colors “which alter quickly in the light and lose their relative values” and knew that only “by brilliance and directness of color and not by a manifold scheme of tints” could their full effects be achieved.

Painting fell behind the other arts. An ignorance (or was it a disregard?) of perspective and proportion led to the adoption of conventional forms which at times converted trees into cabbages and bushes into Brussels sprouts, while three angry men in a tub substituted heroically for a naval engagement. In the illuminations of manuscripts work of a most exquisite nature and of almost photographic clarity was done. The medieval painter was a lover of detail and of microscopic representations; he could compress a whole town into a square inch and throng a centimeter bridge with revelers. This was partly due, in illuminations, to the obvious lack of space in the manuscript, but the artist generally, as nature always, was obsessed by a *horror vacui*. Even as a modern sign painter will sometimes fill up the offending space between an L and the following letter with some curlicue or other, so the medieval painter crowded his picture with details that no emptiness should appear. So it is that the grass is dotted with thousands of flowers, the trees clothed with leaves and alive with birds, people everywhere, and a town visible from the window or glimpsed through the foliage. “The skies above the various figures, the clothes that robe, the atmosphere that surrounds them, are coloured with intense radiance as if a sunbeam were, by some magic contrivance, insphered within the parchment, and inwoven with the picture; and every face wears within it such a garland of charming things that the student could contemplate it for ever.” And everywhere, what a wealth of happy monsters! “amazingly shapeless figures and figured shapes, what slovenly donkeys, what fascinating lions, what terrifying centaurs, what gnomes, what spotted tigers, what warring knights, what horn-

Tapestries

Painting

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

blowing huntsmen! Here one sees many bodies under a single head and there above a single body, many heads; here one notices a quadruped with the tail of a serpent, there a fish with a quadruped's head; here a something with the forepart of a horse but from the middle backwards it is a goat, there a horned beast with the hind-quarters of a horse."

After the thirteenth century the miniature gives way to the triptych, the mosaic to the fresco (in Italy) and to the glory of stained glass (north of the Alps). With Giotto human figures are delineated with more reality, though the backgrounds remained unchanged and scornful of perspective. Fra Angelico (1387-1455) was a painter of emotions, but he recognized the value of proportion and perspective, which found their great champion in Leonardo da Vinci.

*Political
science*

*The principles
of medieval
political
theory*

"Man is a political animal," and he lost none of this characteristic during the Middle Ages. The relation of the individual to the State and to the Church and of the State to the Church were problems which constantly presented themselves and for which solutions were constantly being sought. The political theory of the Middle Ages was derived from elements which were in part classical, in part Christian, and in part Teutonic. At the very base rested the conception that society and the institutions of society were artificial or conventional foundations and not natural organisms. The theory of an original "State of Nature" was common to the Ancients (although directly opposed to the Aristotelian doctrine of society as a natural institution) and easily reconciled with the "State of Innocence" as set forth in Genesis. The penetration of evil had brought an end to this state of things, and the institutions of society had been created to save mankind from itself and to lead it back to its lost inheritance.

Jean de Meung, who wrote the continuation of the *Roman de la Rose*, had no illusions as to the *humanness* of social institutions:

"No king or prince was with them yet,
To plunder and wrong, to ravish and fret;
There were no rich, there were no poor,
For no man yet kept his own store."

This idyllic condition passed away with the discovery of property rights and the "cashnexus":

“ Even the ground they parcelled out,
 And placed the landmarks all about ;
 And over these, whene'er they met
 Fierce battle raged. What they could get
 They seized and snatched ; and everywhere
 The strongest got the biggest share.

So that at length, of plunder tired,
 Needs must a guardian should be hired.”

Society and government were therefore evil in that they were the results of evil, but they were good in that their purpose was good. Basic, again, was the belief in the equality of men which pre-Christians had confessed (despite Aristotle and his theory of inequality) and which the Christian Fathers proclaimed. A third principle, derived from Greece and Rome, this time in agreement with Aristotle, was that the State existed for the sole purpose of maintaining justice. This last point involved the recognition of the individual with rights and liberties and gave a moral justification to the State and a moral end as its objective. These principles—the artificial nature of the State, the equality of mankind, and the justification of the State as a moral agent, principles which Christianity adopted and only slightly modified—were the chief contributions of the ancient world to medieval political theory. The Teutonic peoples added another, the undisputed supremacy of law, which, however, “ was not conceived of primarily as expressing the deliberate or conscious will of the community. It was, properly speaking, nothing but the custom of the community, a habit of action which was the expression or form of the life of the community.”¹¹ With the introduction of this principle medieval theory diverged from the Roman, for law is no longer regarded as “ something which is made by the ruler, but as resting upon the agreement of the whole community.” The king or emperor is as subject to it as the meanest of his people.

“ Erlys and barrons in the halle
 Wenton to the emperor alle,
 And sayed, ‘ Lord, syr emperor
 Thou doost thy selfel lytil honour,
 For to suffyre thy sone be slaye,
 Withouten any proses of lawe.’ ”

¹¹ Carlyle, *op. cit.*, V, 457.

This exaltation of law was due to the belief that law was the "expression of *justice*—that is, of something which belongs to the divine nature itself"—or of the *natural law*: that part of the divine law which man could comprehend by the exercise of reason. This definition of law prepared the way for a distinction between a monarchy and a tyranny and was the just test of a legitimate or illegitimate government. The law went further, for it made the king. Whether the king was elected, held his office by inheritance, or was regarded as appointed by God, his responsibility to the law remained and his authority ceased when he abused his position. The subjects were bound by an oath of obedience to the king, but the king also swore to uphold the law.

The Middle Ages injected one problem into politics which it could not solve, nor has any succeeding period been more successful—the problem of the relation between the Church and the State. Accepting the hypothesis of human salvation attainable only by adhering to the laws of God and the resultant responsibility of the individual to God, it is obvious that the Church, "the only recognized representative of the religious life should not, must not, accept the authority (of others) in the matter of religion." This was clearly and universally recognized, and the respective functions of Church and State were defined.

Pope Gelasius I, in the fifth century, declared that the "Christian emperor needs the priest for the attainment of eternal life, and the priest depends upon the government of the emperor in temporal matters." Eight hundred years later the Gelasian principle has remained unchanged, and Dante is merely speaking for the Middle Ages when he says: "Unutterable Providence, then, has set two ends before man to be contemplated by him; the blessedness, to wit, of this life, which consists in the exercise of his proper power and is figured by the terrestrial paradise, and the blessedness of eternal life, which consists in the fruition of the divine aspect, to which his proper power may not ascend unless assisted by the divine light. . . . Wherefore man had need of a twofold directive power according to his twofold end, to wit, the supreme pontiff, to lead the human race, in accordance with things revealed, to eternal life; and the emperor, to direct the human race to temporal felicity in accordance with the teachings of philosophy."¹²

¹² *De Monarchia*, Book iii.

Sound enough in theory, the relationship proved most discordant in practice. Inevitably the functions overlapped, the sword was joined unto the crozier,

“ and the two
Must of necessity, go ill together.”

The extension of feudalism, the temporal possessions of the Church, the public duties of bishops, and, above all, investiture and the exaltation of the papal office made confusion worse confounded. Yet, in the crash of Empire and of papacy the theory persisted unaltered, indeed unalterable, for moral standards believed to be of divine origin still control the consciences of millions who must still say to the State as Peter and John once replied to their judges, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye.”¹³

*The danger
of pagan
literature*

Until the eleventh century the language of the literary world was Latin. The universal nature of the Church made the employment of a single medium desirable, if not essential. Greek, the original language of the Church, gave way rapidly in the West to the language of the Empire, so rapidly that by the fifth century it was known to but a few. The proselyting efforts of the Church required that the pagans be challenged on their own ground and “on a common intellectual level.” This entailed the training of Christian apologists in the rhetorical schools, and of necessity brought them into contact with pagan thought and “its associations of polytheism and immorality, its dangerous philosophy, and its sensual love of beauty.” There was peril in this and none recognized it quicker than the Church, but there was no choice and the Church was obliged to use the words and style of the Classics, at the same time repudiating their wantonness and false doctrines. Jerome thought he saw an escape from this dilemma when he “lighted on the text in Deuteronomy setting forth the conditions on which an Israelite might take unto himself a captive maid,” and applied it to pagan poetry. “Whatsoever is in her of love, of wantonness, of idolatry, I shave; and having made of her an Israelite indeed, I beget sons unto the Lord.” But it was not an escape: “Dye your wool once purple and

¹³ This section is heavily (and obviously) indebted to Carlyle, *op. cit.*, V, *passim*.

what water will cleanse it of that stain?" he regretted, "and his metaphor is absolute for mediaeval literature."¹⁴

This training in the Classics, which engendered a taste for rhetorical flourish and a love of form, was never forgotten, and a pagan freshness breathes throughout the religious poetry of the Middle Ages. And the religious poetry was good. In the fourth century St Ambrose started hymnology upon its long and checkered career with this really charming

"Aeterne rerum conditor
Noctem diemque qui regis
Et temporum das tempora
Ut alleves fastidia."

"Eternal Lord the world that made,
Who hides the day in Night's black
shade,
And fixes hour on hour, that we
May never faint or weary be."¹⁵

In the same century Prudentius not only composed a dignified *Hymn for the Burial of the Dead*, but set the vogue in poetic martyrologies, in which the martyr becomes "fearless, uncompromising, proud and violent" and "in the agony of death calmly addresses his tormentors," often at tedious length, to stop "only when he has said enough and is anxious to depart and claim his crown." The real foes of the martyr are not the imperial persecutors but "the demons . . . the unseen powers, surrounding the believer night and day." So it is that Prudentius in his *Psychomachia* may be regarded as the father of Christian allegory, for the poem is a "series of epic combats between personified Virtues and Vices." In the sixth century a truly great poet appeared in Fortunatus, whose *Vexilla regis* ranks with the best of religious verse. Fortunatus can stand the acid test of translation, as Raby's happy rendering of the *Pange, Lingua* shows.

"Faithful Cross! above all other,
One and only noble Tree!
None in foliage, none in blossom
None in fruit, thy peer may be;
Sweetest wood, and sweetest iron!
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

Bend, O lofty Tree, thy branches,
Thy too rigid sinews bend;

¹⁴ Waddell, H., *The Wandering Scholars*, pp. xv-xviii.

¹⁵ Trans. by Wright and Sinclair, *A History of Later Latin Literature*, p. 19.

And awhile the stubborn hardness,
Which thy birth bestowed, suspend;
And the limbs of Heaven's high Monarch
Gently on thine arms extend!"¹⁶

The ninth century saw the composition by Theodulf of Orléans of the *Gloria, Laus et Honor*, the greatest of Easter Hymns, sung to this day by Catholics and Protestants alike. In the same century appeared the *Veni, Creator Spiritus (Come, Holy Spirit)* of Raban Maur and a secular poem of a lightness of cast which scarce conceals the heaviness of heart of the monk (Gottschalk) who penned it.

"Ut quid iubes, pusiole,
quare mandas, filiole,
carmen dulce me cantare,
cum sim longe exsul valde
intra mare?
O cur iubes canere?"

"Why bid me sing, my pretty one?
Why bid me sing, my little son?
How can I sing?
I live in exile far away,
Penned by the waves. Ah! Lacka-
day!
Why bid me sing?"¹⁷

In the twelfth century the use of Latin began to decline and gave way before the expanding use of the vernacular tongues. Such Latin verse as is worthy of note was, in the main, composed by the wandering scholars, on nonreligious themes. One notable exception must be made in the case of Abelard, who revealed in his verse the same spirit of freedom that he showed in the schools:

"Low in my grave with thee
Happy to lie,
Since there's no greater thing left Love to do,
And to live after thee
Is but to die,
For with but half a soul, what can Life do?"¹⁸

"But the ecclesiastical culture still overshadowed these efforts at freedom. The forms of this secular or quasi-secular verse were borrowed from the poetry of the Church. . . ." As might be expected from their source, the best of these sing the praises of love and wine. The most famous of drinking songs is the incomparable

"Meum est propositum
in taberna mori,
"Well I know my end will come
In a tavern lying

¹⁶ Raby, E. J. E., *A History of Christian Latin Poetry*, ch. iii.

¹⁷ Wright and Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁸ Waddell, H., *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, pp. 168-169.

vinum sit appositum
 Morientis ori
 ut dicant cum venerint
 angelorum chori,
 'deus sit propitius
 huic potatori,'"

With a tankard to my lips,
 While the angels flying
 Up to Heaven blithely sing,
 I shall hear them crying:—
 'Mercy Lord! A toper stout
 Begs for grace a-dying.'"¹⁹

while the *Dum Dianæ vitrea* marks "the height of secular Latin poetry, even as the *Dies Iræ* of sacred." That Miss Waddell is not exaggerating may be judged from her own translation:

"When Diana lighteth
 Late her crystal lamp,
 Her pale glory kindleth
 At her brother's fire:
 Little straying west winds
 Wander over heaven,
 Moonlight falleth,
 And recalleth
 With a wakening of old pain,
 Hearts that have denied his reign,
 To Love again."²⁰

*Chansons
 de geste*

As the eleventh century was coming to a close, the whole course of medieval literature was altered by the tremendous popularity of the vernacular as it found expression in the *Chansons de geste* or the "Legendary Cycles" of Northern France. These epic creations made such an appeal that

"Ne sont que trois matières à nul home entendant,
 De France, de Bretagne, et de Rome le grant."

The three matters to which the poet (Jean Bodel) refers are the epic legends which were created round the names of Charlemagne, King Arthur, and Alexander.

*Carolingian
 Cycle*

The "Carolingian Cycle" is the earliest and comprises some seventy to eighty poems, of which the *Chanson de Roland* is easily the most famous. Most of them are long to the point of tediousness, and all of them are similar in depicting the frankly stupendous deeds of a strangely feudal Charlemagne. Sung, or recited as they most probably were, to lords and ladies there was no scarcity of bloodshed or feats of derring-do. Written for a feudal age they are feudal in every line and are of great value in revealing contemporary life and

¹⁹ Wright and Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

²⁰ *Wandering Scholars*, p. 148.

contemporary ideals. They were carried everywhere by minstrels and travelers and became a model for poets to imitate or improve.

The "Arthurian Cycle" followed closely upon the Carolingian, if, indeed, it was not contemporaneous. It developed in Brittany and reflects the charming elf superstitions so characteristic of the Breton and his Cornish cousin. Where in the Carolingian Cycle the hero took his joy in the clash of steel, in the Arthurian

*Arthurian
Cycle*

"The elf-queen, with her joly compayne,
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede."

Arthur himself comes into prominence only after the Cycle is under way and Merlin has provided it with an atmosphere of wizardry and eeriness which it never loses. There is plenty of bravery in the "matter of Brittany," but it is a bravery tempered by love and ennobled by high purpose. Hence it had greater poetic possibilities than the "matter of France" and did produce, in the *Parsifal* of Wolfram von Eschenbach and the version of *Tristan and Iseult* of Godfrey of Strasbourg, two legends at least that have been a source of inspiration to poets and musicians ever since.

The "matter of Rome" was similar in character to the Carolingian Cycle and far inferior (as poetry) to the Arthurian. It attempted to retell the story of classical heroism, using Alexander or Æneas as its chief exponent and Thebes and Troy as likely backgrounds. One of its characteristics was the twelve-syllable line, the wearisome "Alexandrine." There is none of the fresh vigor which relieves the other "matters"; it is "artificial and learned as Palladian architecture, as fantastic as Baroque." But it was popular in its day:

"The storie of Alisaundre is so comune
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune."

*The
Alexandrine*

Jean Bodel might have added a fourth "matter," for Teutonic peoples were also contributing: Iceland with its *Volsung-saga* in the twelfth and the Rhineland with the *Nibelungenlied* in the thirteenth century.²¹

Although the south of France had produced the Alexandrine Cycle, it cared much more for songs of love than for epics of war. In the cultural circles of Languedoc the minstrels and troubadours (*trouvères*) had found willing audiences and even noble imitators. As a rule the troubadours dropped the lengthy epic in favor of the lyric

²¹ See *Camb. Med. Hist.*, VI, ch. xxv.

and preferred to show their genius by the construction of intricate verse and unconventional rhyme-schemes. They sang of every subject under (and including) the sun. There was infinite possibility in this poesy, and troubadours were soon to be found everywhere in Europe; as *trouvères* in northern France and as *Minnesänger* in Germany.

Lack of ideas? A distinguished literary critic has remarked that the poets of the Middle Ages were “poets of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, and not of ideas or emotions.” It is true that there was much conventionality (and when is there not?) and that many a poet about to welcome the returning spring was not content with crying “Cuckoo” or suggesting

“ Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray’s edge — ” but informs us that as he was walking through a wood he heard the thrush, the nightingale, and thirty or forty more songsters, naming each one. That may not be original, but it may well be emotion, and it is certain that the poet would not have missed

“ The primrose by the river’s brim.”

There was plenty of emotion in the Middle Ages and men gave freer play to it than they have since. Doughty warriors wept as shamelessly as they laughed, and the poet not only had emotions but expressed them; emotions of every kind, for God, for nature, for wine, for love.

“ Mary, modyr, cum and se,
Thi son is naylyd on a tre.
His body is wappyd all in wo,
Hand and fot he may not go;
Thi son, lady, that thou lovyst soo,
Nakyd is naylyd on a tre.”

There is drama in the very familiarity. The song of Mary to the infant Christ reveals the intense *humanness* which gives medieval Christianity its charm and explains its power:

“ Iesu, swete sone dere!
On porful bed list thou here,
And that me greveth sore;
For thi cradel is ase a bere,
Oxe and asse beth thi fere;
Weope ich mai thar-fore.
Iesu, swete, beo noth wroth

Thou ich nabbe clout ne cloth
 The on for to folde,
 The on to folde ne to wrappe;
 For ich nabbe clout ne lappe;
 Bote ley thou thi fet to my pappe,
 And wite the from the colde."

The medieval poet never drew from wells so deep, but a nun found it disturbing to sit alone in her cell, for she knows that

" Softly the west wind blows,
 Gaily the warm sun goes.
 The earth her bosom showeth
 And with all sweetness floweth,
 Goes forth the scarlet spring,
 Clad with all blossoming,
 Sprinkles the fields with flowers,
 Leaves on the forest
 Dens for four-footed things,
 Sweet nests for all with wings,
 On every blossoming bough,
 Joy ringeth now." ²²

Nor may nature complain of cold treatment from Dante, or Petrarch, or Chaucer. Love, inevitably, provided a test and the medieval poet did not fail. In such a gem as

" When I think upon her eyes
 Like twin stars,
 And the mouth that were a God's
 Bliss to kiss
 I've transcended far, it seems
 Treasures of ancient kings," ²³

he stands acquitted of banality and of heartlessness. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries poetry wandered bewildered in the mists of allegory, or expressed itself with super-subtlety, in fixed and standardized meter. For sheer energy and "much ado about nothing" there is little to compare with the 82,000 lines which William Machaut called his verses.

Very popular were the *fabliaux* or stories of the common people *Fabliaux* and enjoyed especially by them. They were generally humorous and almost always coarse, using the clergy as a butt for their satire and the cuckold and the henpecked husband as reliable provocatives of

²² *Medieval Latin Lyrics*, pp. 156-157.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

mirth. The "miracle" plays gave way to the more secular "mysteries," which drew heavily from the *fabliaux* but which marked an important step in the development of the drama. Vernacular prose was, on the whole, inferior to verse and did not properly find itself until late in the thirteenth century, although the *Book of the Holy Words and the Good deeds of our Saint Louis*, by de Joinville, is a charming piece of writing. The mystics contributed the delightful *Little Flowers of St Francis*, the interesting compendium of marvels, known as the *Golden Legend* (Jacques de Voragine), and the encyclopedic curiosity, the *Book of Contemplation* (Raymond Lull).

Fourteenth and fifteenth century prose reflects the sadness of war and the commonplace interests of the rising middle class. There are histories, biographies, translations, encyclopedias, and "popular" works on scientific subjects. Amid a mass of satirical writings on the anachronisms of feudalism, misgovernment, and the foibles of the clergy, the *Petit Jehan de Saintré*, the *Roman de Renart*, and the *Ship of Fools* stand out predominantly. Nicholas of Oresme opened up a new literary field with his *First Discovery of Money*, and Philip of Mezière contributed something worth while to political theory in his *Songe du Vergier*. German writers, with the exception of such preachers and teachers as Berthold of Regensburg, Tauler, and Geiler of Kaisersberg, showed a tendency to abandon the vernacular and use Latin once again as their literary medium. But the *Mémoires* of Joinville, the sweet style of Aucassin and Nicolle, the *Chronicles* of Froissart, Comines, and Chrétien de Troyes, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, the *Sonnets* of Petrarch, the *Divine Comedy* and the *Canterbury Tales*, all gave promise of a glory that was to come!

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CHAPTER XXII

THE AGE OF FAITH

ONE of the most difficult tasks for the modern student of the Middle Ages is to appreciate properly what he knows quite well to be a fact — the overwhelming importance of the Church and the all-pervading influence of religious concepts. A perfect appreciation cannot be expected, for it cannot be obtained; but it must be constantly kept in mind that the fundamental characteristic of every human being in Europe (with the exception of Jews and Saracens) was a recognized subjection to the Church. The Church was everywhere, ineluctable; it affected every human activity and it conditioned every human relationship. The subjects of any earthly lord were no less subjects of the Church, and everyone knew that at Rome was a power which by its control over souls was as superior to temporal rule as the sun to the moon. Nor was this superiority a mere pious theory; it was often a fact, and this the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216) illustrates perhaps most clearly of all.

Lothar Conti came to the chair of Peter with a vast knowledge of canon law and a firm belief in the supremacy of the papacy to any human institution. He was supported by the opinions of Nicholas I and the two great Gregorys, and he was favored by the embarrassments of contemporary rulers. The will of the Emperor Henry VI, the minority of Frederick II, and the rivalry of Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick made him lord of Sicily and arbiter of the Empire. John of England was so hard pressed by his barons and the threat of a French invasion that he resigned his kingdom as a fief to the Holy See. Philip Augustus of France gave way to Innocent when the Pope laid his lands under an interdict. The King of Portugal admitted the Pope's claim to lands conquered from the infidel and rendered homage for his kingdom, while Peter of Aragon took an oath "to be true and loyal to my lord the Pope Innocent."

Innocent was not content with urging claims, he realized them. He excommunicated Philip Augustus for repudiating his Danish wife and the King of Leon for marrying his cousin. (He might

Innocent III
(1198-1216)

also have excommunicated John of England for putting away his wife, or Peter of Aragon for marrying a married woman, or Raymond VI of Toulouse for contracting a third marriage while his former wives were still alive.) He excommunicated Philip Augustus again because he wanted Philip's son to invade England, and the son because he persisted in carrying out the invasion begun at Innocent's suggestion. Both Otto of Brunswick and Philip of Swabia were declared excommunicate; John of England was excommunicated for objecting to Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury, and the King of Bohemia was reproved for recognizing Philip of Swabia. As Hildebrand before him, Innocent followed excommunication with deposition, releasing from their obedience the subjects of Otto IV, Philip II, John of England, and Raymond of Toulouse. He interfered also in what might appear to be matters of a strictly political nature, for he declared that the confiscated estates of heretics were forfeited to the Church and not to the overlord, and he pronounced the Magna Carta to be invalid.

In these manifold activities he did not forget the Church. It was from Innocent that Francis and Dominic received papal approval for their great work, it was Innocent who launched the terrible Crusade against Languedoc (though he tried to put a stop to its atrocities), and it was Innocent who summoned and dominated the Fourth (really the Fifth) Lateran Council of 1215, which attempted so much in the way of Church reform.

The Council was frankly called to meet the "evil of the times" and the moral laxity which characterized churchmen no less than the laity. Seventy canons were drawn up by Innocent and approved by the Council. It seemed necessary to present a clear exposition of the Catholic Faith that men might avoid the pitfalls of heresy. The very first canon declares that there is but one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator of all things spiritual and physical. There is but one universal Church, outside of which there can be no salvation and within which there is but one sacrifice, the Mass. In describing the mystery of the Mass the word "transubstantiation" came into official use for the first time. Other canons authorized the handing over of condemned heretics to the secular government for punishment; ordered archbishops to hold provincial councils each year; provided for the establishment of a schoolmaster in each of the cathedral churches; forbade the establishment of new religious orders; ordered the clergy to abstain from incontinence, drunken-

*The Council of
1215*

ness, hunting and hawking, attendance at plays, frequenting taverns, and participating in secular pursuits. The Council forbade the clergy to attend executions or ordeals by fire or water. It enjoined upon "all the faithful of both sexes, having arrived at the years of discretion, to confess all their sins at least once a year to their proper priest and to take communion at Easter." It forbade the adoration of new relics until they had been investigated and approved by the Pope and prescribed all fees for burials or marriages, "without prejudice, however, to existing customs and pious usages." The final canons directed the Jews and Saracens to wear a distinctive dress and forbade them to hold any public office.

Great as Innocent was and remarkable as were his qualities of statecraft, his success was fundamentally due to the splendid organization of the Church itself. The Church was organized as no contemporary state was organized. Inheriting and adopting the system of the Roman Empire, the Rome of the popes was amazingly like the Rome of the Cæsars. The ecclesiastical map of France on the eve of the Revolution was substantially a map of imperial *Gallia*. Where Rome had its legions, the Church had its monks, its friars, and its priests; and the fear which men might have had of the sword of the Roman soldier was less than the terror inspired by the damnation of the Church. When it is remembered that Heaven or even Purgatory could be attained only by means of the sacraments and that the sacraments were in the exclusive administration of the clergy, something of the tremendous power of the Church over all men can be realized.

The sacramental system

The sacramental system reached its present form only in the twelfth century as a result of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. The sacraments were seven in number. Five of them directly affected everyone, since upon them depended the individual's hopes of salvation: Baptism (which, in cases of emergency could be, indeed must be, administered by laymen) to wash away the taint of original sin; Confirmation (administered by the bishop), by which the individual was received into the Church; the Eucharist (performable by priests), by which the communicant became identified with Christ; Penance (a priestly function), which removed committed sin; and Extreme Unction, which was really the Eucharist performed at the last moment of life. The remaining sacraments, marriage and the reception of Holy Orders, were naturally of limited application.

The administration of the Church differed from that of temporal

states chiefly in efficiency. Its legislative activity was far greater. *Legislation* Its will was expressed in the great body of canon law, and particular matters were handled by councils and synods, papal decisions and the thousands of letters dispatched from the *curia*. Its laws were enforceable and enforced in its own courts; each diocese had its special *curia* presided over by judges specially trained in canon law and assisted by experienced notaries. The decisions of the court found their sanction in imprisonment, fines, penance, or, in the case of heresy and apostasy, death. The staggering amount of general Church business was handled by the *curia* at Rome, which for better administrative efficiency was divided into four departments: the *cancellaria*, which limited itself to matters directly affecting the pope and his cardinals; the *dataria*, which attended to dispensations, indulgences, absolutions, and the like; the *rota*, or judicial body; and the *camera*, which supervised the expenditures and the vast income derived from revenues from the papal "States," feudal dues, tithes, Peter's Pence (paid generally only by England and the Scandinavian countries), gifts, notarial fees, or fees due from the recipient of an appointment.

Administrative bodies

For administrative purposes Christendom, like the old Empire, was divided along territorial lines. Countries were divided into provinces under the rule of an archbishop; provinces into dioceses, under a bishop; dioceses into deaneries, subject to an archdeacon; and the deaneries into parishes. The bishop was an extremely busy man. In addition to the administration of his own church, in which he was assisted (or hampered) by the cathedral chapter, he was obliged to ordain the priests in his diocese; dedicate churches; make periodic visitations to the monasteries, nunneries, and parishes to see how God and man were being served; summon the clergy to synods; supervise the work of his *curia*; and administer discipline to delinquent clerics. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he was also a feudal baron with all the obligations, social, judicial, and military, which such a position involved.

The bishop

It was in the parish that men came in closest contact with the Church, and it was from the parish that the great mass of Christians derived their faith and learned its observance. In many ways this was unfortunate — both for the Church and the individual. The great majority of parish priests were of servile origin, although manumission always preceded ordination. They were scarcely better educated than the flocks intrusted to them. Many knew no Latin

The parish priest

at all, except by rote; some, upon examination, could not find the canon of the Mass even when offered the service book. The parish priest whom Piers Plowman met was frank enough about his attainments:

“ I have been priest and parson for thirty winters past,
 But I cannot ‘ sol-fa ’ or sing, or read a Latin life of Saints;
 But I can find a hare in a field or in a furrow
 Better than construe the first Psalm or explain it to the parish.”

The parish priests were hard working and hard worked; they had the unpleasant task of collecting the “ tithe,” that ten per cent tax on every portion of the produce “ down to the very pot-herbs in the garden,” and on individual earnings, even of prostitutes “ if repentant,” and of beggars, though it was regarded as bad form to accept the latter. They were responsible for the upkeep and repair of the chancel (the nave was left to the care of the parishioners) and were hard put to it to make both ends meet. Indeed, one despairing individual concluded that clerics “ ought to be like the dragons in Scripture and able to live on wind.”

Ill-equipped as he was, the parish priest, and this applies particularly to the rural parishes, was the only churchman who came into effective contact with the nonnoble population. He might be unpopular as a tithe gatherer, but after all he was their only real friend. Only rarely, as when the bishop might come among them for purposes of confirmation or other episcopal business, or when a wandering friar, as he passed through the village, stopped perhaps to preach to the workers in the fields, did the people feel the presence of the Church as distinct from the parish. For the most part their Christianity was such as the priest taught or such as they conceived it for themselves.

Children were baptized as soon as possible after birth; if there seemed to be any danger of a speedy death, this duty devolved upon the midwife, who might be called upon to perform some very rough and ready surgery:

“ And though the chylde but half be bore,
 Head and neck and no more,
 Bid her spare never the later
 To crystene it and cast on water;

And if the woman then die,
 Teach the midwife that she hie

For to undo her with a knife,
And for to save the child's life."

The priest was expected to see that his parishioners knew the Ten Commandments, the *Paternoster*, and the "fourteen points" of the Creed, seven dealing with man's duty to God, seven with man's relationship to man. He was also to instruct them in the seven sacraments, the seven works of mercy, the seven virtues, and the seven deadly sins, and from time to time, generally during Lent, to assure himself by investigation that these things were known. He would also impress upon them the importance of confession, penance, and attendance at Mass, and in simple homilies, crowded with homely metaphors, urge the necessity of moral conduct.

As the priest had imparted the gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism, so he bestowed the Church's blessing upon marriages. It is generally forgotten that perfectly legal marriages could, for centuries, be contracted without the intervention of the Church at all. A simple, even secret, plighting of troth was theoretically sufficient, although the happy pair was expected to inform the priest later and accept penance for their precipitancy or tact. The more regular procedure was to publish the banns on three successive holy days. The priest gave his blessing openly at the church door to insure a reasonable number of witnesses.

Naturally, the priest's most intimate relation with his flock came through his position as confessor and dispenser of penance. The strict letter of the law required the appearance of the sinner at confession only once a year, usually just before partaking in the Easter celebration, but the priest was expected to encourage more frequent attendance. The duties of a confessor, especially in a small parish, demanded a considerable amount of tact, not only in urging the penitent to a full confession, but in prescribing penance. The penitent was asked whether he knew the Ten Commandments or had doubted any article of the Faith; if he had used false weights and measures; if he had played at games at a funeral; if he had withheld or destroyed any tithes; if he had left open a gate so that beasts had destroyed a neighbor's garden; or if he (or she) had been incontinent, and if so whether "for love or money," since in the latter case

"Then the sin double were
And needed penance much the more."

The penalties inflicted must not be so light as to be ineffective as a corrective or so heavy as to discourage the penitent, for

“ If thou lay on him more
Than he will assent for
All he will cast him fro;

• • • • •
Better it is with penance light
Into Purgatory a man to put
Than with penance over much
Send him to Hell.

Nor must penance neglect other considerations:

“ If a wife have done a sin
Such penance thou give her then
That her husband may not ken,
Lest for the penance sake
Woe and wrath thee between them wake.”

Those who had been guilty of sin and had not confessed and received penance felt the cold blast of the Church's damnation in the utterance of the “Great Sentence” which the priest should repeat twice or three times a year. Upon such an occasion were used the famous articles—bell, book, and candle—although sometimes (perhaps of necessity) a cross was substituted for the Bible. The candle was lighted and the priest pronounced the truly dreadful curse of the Church:

“ By authority of God Almighty, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, and of all the Saints of Heaven. First we accuse all them that have broken the peace of Holy Church or have disturbed it; also all those that withhold any freedoms of Holy Church or bear away . . . lands, houses, rents or freedoms or cause Holy Church to be impaired. Also all those that for wrath or hate of any parson or vicar proper tithes withhold, or destroy or bear away, and all that consent thereto; also all that unrightfully defame any person or procureth to be defamed; also all that burneth Holy Church or any other place, and all that consent thereto; also all common and open thieves, robbers . . . ; also all heretics that act willingly against the law of Holy Church and the Faith of Christendom, in word or deed or counsel or in example . . . ; also all that defame man or woman wherefor their state . . . is impaired, for envy or for hate; also all that falsify the Pope's letters or bills or scales; also all that

falsify the king's money or clip it, also all that falsify or use false measures . . . or false weights, . . . or false ell-yards wittingly other than the law of the land will; also all that ordaineth or beareth false witness against matrimony lawfully made or against testament that is true . . . ; also all that destroy corn or any other fruits that fall to God or Holy Church in town or in field, with beasts or with hounds wittingly; also all that help with strength or with victuals or succor Jews or Saracens against Christendom; also all that slay children, or destroy born or unborn, with drinks or with witchcraft . . . ; also all that stand or hearken by nights, under walls, doors or windows for to spy touching evil, and all house-breakers and man-killers; also all that communeth with accursed men or women wittingly; also all that maintain them in their sin; . . . also all that make experiments or witchcraft or charms with ointments of Holy Church, . . . ; also all that lay hand on priest or clerk in violence or harm save in self defense, or any man in church or church-yard . . . ; also all that defoul the Sanctuary wherefore the Holy Office is withdrawn, or church, or church-yard, . . . ; also all false executors that make false testaments and dispose the goods of him that is dead otherwise than his will was at his departing . . . ; also all that leave their children. . . at any church doors or at any other common ways and leave them.

By the authority of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost and of Our Lady Saint Mary, Goddess Mother of Heaven, and all other Virgins, and St Michael and all other Apostles, and St Stephen and all other Martyrs and St Nicholas and all other Confessors and of all the holy Hallowed ones of Heaven; We accuse and warn and depart (cut off) from all good deeds and prayers of Holy Church and of all these hallowed (ones), and damn them into the pain of Hell, all those that have done these articles that we have said before till they come to amendment. We curse them by the authority of the court of Rome, within and without, sleeping or waking, going and sitting, standing and riding, lying above earth and under earth, speaking and crying and drinking; in wood, in water, in field, in town. Curse them Father and Son and Holy Ghost! Curse them Angels and Archangels and all the Nine Orders of Heaven! Curse them Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles and all God's disciples and all Holy Innocents, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins, monks, canons, hermits, priests, and clerks, that they have no part of Mass nor Matins nor of none other good prayers that be done in Holy Church nor in none other places, but that the pains of Hell be their mede with Judas that betrayed Our Lord Jesus Christ; and the life of them be put out of the Book of Life till they

come to amendment and satisfaction make. Let it be done, let it be done! Amen."

When the priest had come to the end of his terrible curse, he flung the candle to the ground and spat upon it and caused the bell to be rung the more to chill the hearts of his listeners. The effect must have been overwhelming.

Scarcely less impressive was the ritual performed on Ash Wednesday at the bishop's church. Those who were doing penance for very serious offenses and had not yet received absolution were solemnly driven out of the church. Bishop Eudes Rigaud of Rouen has left an account of such a ceremony. The penitents were gathered in the church and Eudes spoke to them with sympathetic sternness. "Holy Church is in grief and sadness over the loss of her children; but she is more afflicted by the loss of your souls. That is what obliges her, this day, to drive you forth from her bosom and to deliver your bodies to the Devil to the end that your souls may be saved at the Day of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Therefore I urge upon you to apply yourself with zeal and vigilance to the expiation of your crimes that, being delivered from the Devil's power you may gain once more the protection of Holy Church, your Mother." When the exhortation had finished, a beadle led the file of penitents, each with a lighted candle in either hand, past the archbishop, who blew them out as they filed by. When the last of the penitents had left the church, the great doors were locked and the ceremony was completed with the celebration of Mass. On Maundy Thursday, at eight in the morning, the penitents reappeared with unlighted candles. The door was opened by Eudes himself, who lighted the candles as his repentant children filed inside.

Medieval sermons fluctuated between the extremes of simple familiarity and ostentatious pedantry. When a learned and enthusiastic preacher was in good form, he spoke "for himself and God alone" and was incomprehensible to his audience. A Dominican suggests nine ways of treating a text so that nine sermons could be evolved: you might show how the text received confirmation from other authorities; you might discuss the words involved; you might explain the properties of the things mentioned in the text; or the whole text might be subjected to extensive interpretation; — it might be treated historically, literally, tropologically, allegorically, or anagogically; it might be expounded with analogies or by setting it off with opposites; it might be employed to draw infinite com-

parisons or be developed through the interpretation of a name or the multiplication of synonyms. But the sermons which might result from such treatment were intelligible only to a limited number and could have had neither value nor interest for the multitude. For them was needed the simple parable and the homely metaphor, the explanation of the Christian life with a proper insistence upon the observance of religious duties and a warning against evil conduct.

The sermon which was most effective and most employed combined a lesson in elementary Christian observance with a dissertation upon private morals not infrequently of the "hell-fire and brimstone" type. It was, as a rule, remarkably free from the gross superstitions which people of the present day (with a gullibility not far inferior to that of the folk they criticize) assume to be the very essence of medieval Christianity. The sermon was a straightforward moral appeal. It reminded the congregation that there were Ten Commandments and commented upon the Creed. It urged regularity of confession; it dilated upon the satisfaction which would result from the performance of such good works as relieving the poor and the sick, burying the dead, or forgiving one's enemies. It encouraged those who were striving to walk in the way of the seven virtues (moderation, chastity, liberality, patience, perseverance, charity, and humility); and gave dire warning to those who followed the seven vices (gluttony, luxury, avarice, anger, wanhope [despair], sloth, and pride). It was decidedly evangelical; it portrayed the Gospel as the food of the soul and told how Christ's five wounds would heal the five poisoned senses of man. It dwelt on the "power of Jesus' name" and was not free from an ecstatic mysticism: "O that I might feel Thee in my breast even as sweet as Thou art." It was Sabbatarian in urging the hallowed nature of Sunday, on which day the angels rested and even the damned in Hell enjoyed a respite from their pain. But the priest was admonished not to put temptation in the way of his flock by warning (and thereby informing) them of strange or unnatural vices:

"That of sin against kind
Thou shalt thy parish nothing teach
Nor of that sin no thing preach."

Real effectiveness lay not only in the content of the sermon but in the mold in which it was cast. It needed to be short, for there were no benches for the poor and the congregation stood or knelt

during the service. The best sermons relied upon parables, symbolism which was easy to comprehend, and a blunt vigor of speech which arrested attention. If metaphors were used they were rugged and unmistakable; slanderers and backbiters are spotted adders; "rich men who misuse their wealth are likened to black toads that cannot moderately eat their fill lest the earth on which they sit should play them false"; women who use saffron are yellow frogs or mousetraps of the Devil and their proud array is "the treacherous cheese whereby many a mouse is enticed into the trap."

"They smear themselves with fine wheaten flour, that is the devil's soap, and clothe them (selves) with yellow clothes, that is the devil's covert, and afterwards they look in the mirror that is the devil's hiding place. . . . Now, dear men, for God's love keep yourselves from the devil's mouse-trap, and take heed that ye be not the spotted adders, nor the black toads, nor the yellow frogs."

The dismal chord, which found a response in the uneasy conscience, was the easiest to strike and the surest way to get attention. *Descensus Averni facilis est*, and the medieval preacher had no difficulty in leading the thoughts of his audience to a contemplation of Hell. "We read in books that each man hath for a companion, an angel of Heaven on his right hand that guides him and admonishes him ever to do good, and on his left an accursed spirit that ever teacheth him to evil, and that is the devil." Once the Devil is introduced, Hell follows as a matter of course, and Hell was made very real and vivid.

"Before Hell-gates first they see then
Many a horrible burning tree,
Hanging full of women and men
That was a sorrowful sight to see."

"Hell is wide without measure, and deep and bottomless; full of incomparable fire, for no earthly fire may be compared therewith; full of stench intolerable for no living thing on earth might endure it; full of unutterable sorrow for no mouth may, on account of the wretchedness or the woe thereof, give an account nor tell of it. Yea, the darkness therein is so thick that one may grasp it, for the fire there gives out no light, but blindeth the eyes of them that are there with a smothering smoke, the worst of smokes. And nevertheless in that same black darkness they see black things as devils, that ever maul them and afflict and harass them with all kinds of tortures; and tailed drakes, horrible as devils, that devour them whole and

spew them out afterwards before and behind. At other times they rend them in pieces and chew each goblet of them, and they afterwards become whole again, such as they previously were, to undergo again such bale without recovery, and full well they see themselves very horrible and dreadful; and to increase their pains the loathsome hell-worms, toads, and frogs that eat out their eyes and nostrils, and adders and water-frogs, not like those here, but a hundred times more horrible, sneak in and out of the mouth, ears, eyes, navel, and at the hollow of the breast, as maggots in putrid flesh, ever yet thickest. There is shrieking in the flame and chattering of teeth in the snowy waters. Suddenly they flit upon the heat into the cold, nor ever do they know of these two which is worst for them, for each is intolerable. . . . And this same wanhope is their greatest torment, that none have any more hope of any recovery, but are sure of every ill, to continue in woe, world without end, even in eternity. Each chokes the other, and each is another's torment, and each hateth another and himself as the black devil; and even as they loved them the more in this world, so the more shall they hate them there. And each curseth another, and gnaws off the other's arms, ears, and nose also. I have begun to tell of things that I am not able to bring to any end, though I had a thousand tongues of steel, and told until they were all worn out."

From such despair, the preacher pointed out the way of relief by appealing to the value of the good life and by indicating the infinite mercy of Mary or Christ. Knowing what one should do, there was no need to fall into that worst of sins, wanhope, or despair, for no man was so lost that the divine mercy would not hear and help. "And when thou wast borne in sin he baptized thee, and afterward when thou sinned so foully and so ofte, then he received thee so sweetly, and thee has set in so sweet a fellowship. And every day when thou . . . errs then he amends thee, . . . and when thou hungers then he feeds thee, and when thou art cold then he warms thee, and when thou has heat then he cools thee, and when thou slips then he saves thee and when thou riseth up then he upholds thee, and ever more when thou art at mal ease then he comforts thee."

It was all very simple but it was all very easy to understand. Hell was ever yawning in front of them and one needed to be on one's guard against the never ceasing attacks of the Devil and his imps. But if there was Hell to terrify, there was Heaven to comfort, and Heaven could always be won. Heaven, of course, was well

*The way to
salvation*

worth the winning, for the happy souls "live ever in a splendour that is seven-fold brighter and clearer than the sun, and ever in a strength to perform without any toil, all that they wish, and evermore in a state, in all that ever is good, without diminution, without anything that may harm or ail, in all that is ever soft or sweet. And their life is the sight of God and the knowledge of God. . . . So glad they are of God that all their bliss is so great that no mouth may make mention of it nor any speech discourse of it." There were so many ways of overcoming the disabilities of committed sin and so many agents prepared to intercede for the penitent and to obtain for him an alleviation of punishment or even a remission of sin.

The vividness of Christianity

It is difficult, at so great a distance, to know with any certainty just what Christianity meant to the great mass of the people in the Middle Ages. There can be no reasonable doubt that it meant a great deal to them, but to determine just what they understood it to be and what they expected of it is a problem beset with difficulties. The great masses have left no clear record of their thoughts or their feelings, and it would be hazardous to assume that the theology of the people was the theology of the schoolmen or that the observance of Christianity by the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker squared with canonical precept and clerical importunity. The canons of councils and even the clauses of the "Great Sentence" forbid any such conclusion. Indeed, one would be a little nearer the truth if one began with the assumption that quite uneducated people were attempting to understand extremely complicated mysteries. In their efforts they were conditioned by a fundamental paganism which accepted information about the supernatural with complacency and which treated supernatural beings with both awe and familiarity. To them the sacraments and religious symbols were not merely outward signs of spiritual mysteries, but *things*, sacred in themselves and which of themselves could be of great practical service.

The realness of religion

Religion was very *real* to the people of the Middle Ages. They brought it into every human relationship and activity, not as something transcendental to be treated only with reverence and awe, but as something natural to be treated familiarly although always with respect; not a thing of Sundays, but of every day; not a thing of churches, but of homes and occupations and every phase of life. Hence it was that the people of the Middle Ages often addressed the saints and even the persons of the Godhead with a familiarity

which sounds out of place when used by a modern revivalist. They treated religious subjects with candor, freshness, even humor, and, in short, made such use of religion as would serve them in every circumstance, and for no more complex reason than that religion was so very much a part of their lives that it never occurred to them to treat it otherwise. Their existence was inseparable from the Church; under its auspices they were born, under its protection they lived, and with its blessing they were lowered into the grave while candles continued to burn and prayers to be sung for the speedier release of their souls from Purgatory. In the stained glass and sculpture of the churches they found their books; in its miracle plays, its pageants, its processions, and solemn services they had their drama, their music, and their art; in its wakes and ales their amusements.

It is not surprising that such familiar treatment of religion, with its adaptation to every human need, should make easy the development of much so-called abuse and superstition. But a great deal of that which has been regarded as abuse and superstition was only the result of the effort made by the people to *realize* the mysteries of the Christian Faith. They were not the creations of an unreasoning feeling brought about by some abstract cause such as fear, but were the practical applications to the individual problems of daily life of mysteries accepted with a pagan complacency. It is in this light that one must regard the use (or misuse) of indulgences, of the intercession of the saints, or of pilgrimages, and it is in this light that one must view the widespread employment of charms and incantations.

The people of the Middle Ages were never far removed from the paganism of their ancestors; indeed, vestiges of pagan festivals and rituals still survive in the Christian service and the shades of pagan gods hover in the Christian calendar of saints. The great Easter service is reminiscent, even to the name, of the Festival held in honor of Ostara, the Teutonic goddess of spring; two score of Christian saints acquired a reputation as dragon killers, and these dragons are the identical dragons of Teutonic mythology. Pagans had sought the aid of their priests and sorcerers for the detection of robbers or the recovery of lost goods, and St Anthony performed this office for Christians. The biographers of saints and the recorders of miracles endowed their sacred subjects (not excluding Christ and Mary) with an undeniable humanity; the saints are

Practical uses

*Pagan
survivals*

moved to anger, jealousy, or revenge with earthly quickness and perform their miracles for objects of such personal and apparently trivial importance that the individual may be excused for calling upon his own patron saint to suspend the laws of nature in his behalf. There was no end of wonders; St Aicardus hung his gloves on a sunbeam, only to be outdone by St Goar, who did the same thing with his cape; St Aidan exercised his horse at sea while St Cuanna successfully substituted a flagstone for an absent boat.

So it was not too unnatural, perhaps, under such conditions, that a victim of the toothache should say:

“I conjure thee, loathely beat, with that same spear,
 That Longyous in his hand did bear,
 And also with one hat of thorn,
 That on my Lord’s head was borne,
 With all the words more and less,
 With the office of the Mass,
 With my Lord and his xii apostles,
 With oure Ladye and her X maydenys,
 Saynt Margrete, the holy quene,
 Saynt Katerin, the holy virgyne,
 ix tymes God’s forbid, thou wicked worme,
 That ever thou make any resting,
 But away must thou wend,
 To the earth and the stone! ”

Gullible? Of course the Middle Ages were gullible, but if by gullibility one means an unreasoning belief, moderns must be careful in accusing their ancestors, for “never in the history of the world did so many people believe so firmly in so many things, the authority for which they could not test, as do those in London and New York today.” Medieval preachers opposed the use of charms in vain. Berthold of Regensburg complained that “many of the village folk would come to heaven, were it not for their witchcrafts. The woman has spells for getting a husband, spells for her marriage; spells on this side and on that; spells before the child is born, before the christening, and after the christening; and all she gains with her spells is that her child fares the worse all of its life.”

The same naturalness which characterized belief was carried over into religious observance. The man in the Middle Ages was not a consistent churchgoer, and medieval sermons are full of exhortations to better attendance.

“ The taverne is open before the Churche be
The pots are rung as bells of drunkenness
Before the church bells with great solemnity.
There hear these wretches theyr Matyns and theyr Masse;
Who listeth to take heed shall often see doubtless
The stalls of the tavern stuffed nearly each one
When in the churche he shal see few or none.”

The conduct at a service would probably astonish the modern; the knight sauntered about with hawk on wrist, his dogs following, and perhaps fighting, behind; the women gathered together and talked (as women do) and laughed and took mental notes of each other's dresses for future imitation or disparagement. It was enumerated among the virtues of St Louis that he rarely conducted business of State while he was attending service in Church. The common people often waited outside the door exchanging worldly gossip or rough wit until the moment for the elevation of the Host was announced by the sacring bell, when they would rush in pell-mell to behold the mystery and as speedily crowd out again:

“ Thou must not do as the country-folk do who stay in the tavern, drinking and filling their bellies until they hear the sacring bell which announces the elevation of the Lord's Body; then they drink and run swiftly, when the Lord's Body is elevated, then go they with their greasy lips and often drunken and kiss the altar; and then they run away and return to their wine; and in course of time the mice come and nibble at the greasy altar-cloth and altar-linen.”

Perhaps some of this was due to the fact that all too often the priest set the lead rather than the example;

“ Many clergy speak as the laity, as our Lord said through the mouth of the Prophet — ‘ The priest shall lead his life as the layman ’; And so they do now and somewhat worse. For the layman honoureth his spouse with clothes more than himself, and the priest not so his Church, which is his spouse, but adorns his servant, who is his whore, with clothes more than himself. The Church clothes are utterly rent and old and his woman's must be whole and new. His altar cloth coarse and soiled and her chemise fine and white. And the alb soiled and her smock white, the head-linen black and her wimple white, or made yellow with saffron. The Mass-cloth of common fustian and her mantle green or brown. . . . The chalice of tin and her cup of mazer and her ring of gold; and the priest is

so much the worse than the layman, the more he honoureth his whore than his Church."

But these same people were capable of building cathedrals and, what is more to the point, of admiring them. They were fond of contemplating the "wounds of Jesus fresh and red"; they felt a strong, intensely human sympathy for His sufferings and for the grief of her whose son was "nakyd and naylyd on a tree," and in the Founder of Christianity they recognized a source of comfort and joy.

"Jhesu, for Thy wounds smart
On feet and on Thine hands two,
Make me meek and low of heart,
And Thee to love as I should do."

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CHAPTER XXIII

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF CAPET

Philip III
(1270-1285)
IN WHATEVER ways the interests of St Louis in his children may have revealed itself, it is clear that a practical training was not one of them. The son to whom the kingdom was intrusted after the pious warrior's death had been, purposely or no, kept obscurely in the background. He had been associated in no department of the administration and came to the throne without experience in the art or mystery of government. His father had bequeathed him some pious precepts but had so far overlooked his education that it was rumored that the new king could not even read. Thus uninstructed in things in general and for his task in particular, Philip III, "the Rash," can hardly be blamed for allowing the government to fall into the hands of his able and ambitious uncle, Charles of Anjou, of his mother, Margaret of Provence, whom the late king had likewise excluded from any participation in the affairs of State, of his wife, Mary of Brabant, and of Peter de la Broce, who had followed a mysterious path from surgeon and *valet de chambre* to royal favorite.

But before this ill-assorted group could cause embarrassment to the new government, the administrators of St Louis had an opportunity to render signal service to the French monarchy. In 1271 Alphonse of Poitiers and his wife (Jeanne of Toulouse) died without issue, and their vast possessions (including Toulouse, Poitou, Auvergne, and the Marquisate of Provence) were saved for the French crown by the vigilance of the old councilors who insisted upon the carrying out of the Treaty of Meaux (1228). Incidentally, and by reason of the same treaty, the district of the Venaissin was given to the papacy, while the Agenais reverted to the King of England (Treaty of Amiens, 1279).

The acquisition
of
Toulouse
In addition to his father's piety Philip inherited something of the quixotic character of St Louis and was intrigued by the glamour of grand designs. This side of his nature made him the willing agent of the personal program of Charles of Anjou. Charles held before his nephew the prospect of an imperial crown, but this the

election of Rudolf of Habsburg (1272) effectively obliterated. There was talk, too, of a Crusade, and Philip went so far as to take the Cross, though nothing came of it. There were occasions, however, when Philip carried his plans into execution and with such precipitancy that his nickname seems not to have been undeserved.

In 1274 Henry, King of Navarre and Count of Champagne and Brie, died, leaving a widow, Blanche of Artois, and a three-year-old daughter, Jeanne. Navarre was a matter of interest to the crowns of Castile and Aragon, and Blanche to insure her daughter's inheritance transferred her rights of wardship to the French king. A rapid invasion of Navarre and the betrothal of the infant heiress to the six-year-old son of Philip III led to the immediate occupation of Champagne and Brie and the eventual incorporation of Navarre into the royal domain. The following year the death of Ferdinand de la Cerda (eldest son of Alphonse X of Castile) prepared the way for a second expedition to the south. The *Cortes* of Castile ignored the claims of the children of Ferdinand and offered the crown to his brother Sancho. The indignant widow (another Blanche) appealed to her brother, Philip III, to right his nephew's wrongs. A deal of preparation and the appearance of an imposing body of knights in the foothills of the Pyrenees completed the military activities of the campaign, which evaporated into negotiations and promises unfulfilled.

A last and fatal journey to the south took place in 1285. It was due to the political aspirations of Charles of Anjou. The "Sicilian Vespers" (1282) had ended the Angevin domination in Sicily, and the Sicilians had offered their kingdom to Peter III of Aragon. This at once subjected Peter to the political hostility of the House of Anjou and the ecclesiastical anathemas of Pope Martin IV. A duel, arranged between Charles and Peter to decide the Sicilian issue, failed to materialize; so Charles and Martin adopted the rather overworked expedient of a Crusade. Peter was excommunicated and deprived of his realm by the Pope. To win the active support of Philip III the Aragonese crown was offered to his son, Charles of Valois, and to defray expenses the French king was permitted to share a tithe levied upon the clergy (theoretically immune). The usual indulgences were granted.

In 1285 the French army debouched into the Spanish plains, having pillaged Roussillon on the way. The Crusaders advanced as far as Girona, which they captured only to find themselves be-

*Southern
problems*
Navarre

Castile

Aragon

sieged. Fever and dysentery played havoc with the soldiers from the north; and when word came that Roger di Loria, the admiral of the Aragonese fleet, had destroyed the relief ships and had cut the water communications to France, there was nothing left but to retreat with what order they could. The stricken army made its way back to France, hampered by ambuscades and harassed by guerilla bands. At Perpignan Philip III succumbed to illness and died on the fifth of October. In this same year every one of the leading figures in the Aragonese drama ended their earthly careers: Philip III, Charles of Anjou, Martin IV, and Peter III.

The career of Philip III was in no sense brilliant and ended in humiliation and defeat. But his reign was distinctly important. The acquisition of Poitou, Toulouse, and Champagne by escheat or marriage gave the King of France a territorial predominance which reduced the feudalism to comparative innocuousness. Nor was Philip III neglectful of royal interests in matters of domestic policy. He respected the Church, but he did not hesitate to legislate against clerical irregularities, and his imposition of a tax upon all clerics who engaged in trade or preferred to "marry than to burn" was probably as effective as the repeated thunders of councils. He was interested in the maintenance of order and the dispensation of justice. He employed men to report on the loyalty of the nobles, extended the activities of the royal court especially in cases of appeal, and subjected to heavy fines those who were negligent in performing military service. If there is much that is colorless and even humiliating in the reign of Philip III, at least it is free from the despicable hypocrisy and sordid cruelty which characterizes the thirty years of his son's rule.

Three sons survived the king who "died, fleeing and deflowering the lily": Philip IV, the new king, Charles of Valois, and Louis of Evreux, whose descendants were to lord it in Navarre. Philip IV was seventeen years of age when he reached the throne which he occupied for a generation of men. He was a puzzle to his contemporaries and has remained an enigma to historians ever since. There is no agreement as to his character and nothing but quandary as to his ability. One thing alone seems reasonably certain: he was tall in stature and handsome in countenance. Indeed, an age which found it more satisfactory to remember kings by their special characteristics than by their numerals instinctively titled him "the

*Importance
of the reign*

*Philip IV
(1285-1314)*

Fair." But all else is contradiction. For Dante he is the "woe of France," the new Pilate, an offshoot of

"that evil plant,
Which casts such shade o'er all the Christian land
That good fruit is but rarely plucked from it,"
(*Purgatory XX*, 43-5.)

and one in whom "Avarice had subdued to itself the blood of the Capets." A French bishop called him "the Great Owl," though another found him to be "pope, king and emperor in one person."

If uncertainty exists concerning his character, complete mystery surrounds his ability. Was he the motive force behind the activities of the reign? Was it he who planned and directed the policies of France, or was he but a handsome figurehead leaving the real work of government to the group of lawyers who surrounded him? And if so, were these lawyers really able and farseeing ministers, or were they merely very active men who turned the opportunities of the moment to their own profit? Geoffrey of Paris, a contemporary, was convinced of the king's laziness and indifference to matters of State, and there is reason to think that such rascals as William of Nogaret, Peter Flotte, and perhaps Enguerrand of Marigni were inclined to

"Take the cash and let the credit go
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum."

The events of the reign are less obscure. Philip's interference in foreign policy was his least brilliant and least successful venture, although there was no lack of activity and no end of correspondence. Charles of Valois was induced to abandon his claims to Aragon in return for the promise of the appanages of Anjou and Maine. This arrangement had the merit of allowing the King of France to escape from the Spanish complication, from which there was no prospect of drawing personal or royal profit. Far more important in the light of future events was the contest with England and its ally, Flanders, for it was in the reign of Philip the Fair that the seeds of the Hundred Years' War began to germinate.

The quarrel with England was one of long standing — dating, indeed, from the conquest of England by William of Normandy. England still retained Guienne and Gascony after Philip Augustus had taken Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine from the luckless

King John. When the "great dowry of Provence" had given France direct control over half of the Midi, it was inevitable that the central government should attempt to extend to the southwest the power it exercised to the southeast. The King of England was the vassal of the King of France for his continental possessions, a fact which protected Gascony and Guienne from unprovoked attack. But feudal law like other law was a two-edged sword, and means could be found for forcing a vassal into direct or alleged disobedience.

Philip III had taken no pains to keep on good terms with Edward I of England, and he has been suspected of promoting discontent among the French vassals of the English king. Philip IV developed his father's policy and with the aid of his lawyers had little difficulty in producing a case. A chronic state of hostility existed between the sailors and fishermen of the nations using the English Channel and the Dogger Bank in the North Sea. Reprisals had been frequent, and something approaching a naval battle off St Mahé in Brittany (1293) had ended disastrously for the mariners of Normandy. The usefulness of this affray to the King of France was enhanced by the fact that Edward I was soon to have his hands full in the attempt to procure the recognition of his suzerainty from John Baliol of Scotland. Philip summoned Edward to appear before the royal court at Paris to answer charges preferred against him. Edward, too busy to attend in person, sent his brother, Edmund of Lancaster, as his representative. Edmund was no match for the legal harpies of the French court and fell victim to a bit of indefensible knavery. As evidence of good faith he surrendered Gascony to the French crown for forty days, to be informed at the expiration of that period that the lands were forfeited through Edward's failure to appear in person. Philip had procured his war.

The contest for Gascony and Guienne rapidly assumed international proportions. Edward, needing continental allies, sought help from the Emperor Adolph of Nassau, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Counts of Holland, Brabant, and Flanders. Philip countered by signing the first of the long list of alliances with Scotland, which was only to end with the death of Mary, Queen of Scots. Of Edward's coalition the Count of Flanders, Guy of Dampierre, was the only reliable member. Flanders, although feudally attached to France, was commercially attracted to England, for the wealth of the Flemish towns, Ypres, Douai, Ghent, Lille, and Bruges, depended largely upon the wool of sheep which pastured on the York-

*St Mahé
(1293)*

Complications

Flanders

shire moors. Guy had been in difficulties with Philip IV for attempting to negotiate a marriage between his daughter Philippa and the future Edward II of England, without consulting his overlord as feudal law required. When war broke out Guy threw in his lot with Edward I.

It was an unfortunate decision, for Edward did not receive sufficient support from his English barons to carry out an effective campaign, and his domestic troubles, coupled with a new uprising in Scotland under Wallace, led him to sign an independent truce with Philip (at Yve-St-Bavon, 1298), which abandoned Guy to the vengeance of the French. The Treaty of Yve-St-Bavon had a significance unsuspected by the "High Contracting Parties," for it provided for the marriage of Edward I with Philip's sister Margaret and the betrothal of the future Edward II to the Princess Isabelle. From this second marriage came the claim which Edward III advanced to the crown of France in the next century.

The withdrawal of Edward I resulted in the occupation of Flanders by Philip, the surrender and imprisonment of Guy of Dampierre, and the establishment in Flanders of a military governor (Jacques de Châtillon). But the French proceeded at once to kill the goose that might, with careful treatment, have laid golden eggs. The French court had seen the wealth of Flanders, and Queen Jeanne had not been pleased with the half thousand women in Bruges who could rival her in the magnificence of their apparel. Jacques de Châtillon began to exploit his commandery with zeal tempered with avarice. The Flemings were filled with resentment and even the French faction, the *Leiliaerts* or "Men of the Lily," weakened in their allegiance. Sedition followed upon sedition in the great towns and culminated in a general massacre of the French in what was to be known as the "Matins of Bruges" (May 18, 1302). A punitive expedition of French knights found swift ruin before a combined force of cavalry and a serious burgher infantry at Courtrai in the "Battle of the Spurs" (July 11, 1302). Two years later a French army led by Philip IV was more successful. The rebellious Flemings were defeated at Mons-en-Puelle and compelled to sign the Treaty of Athies (1305), by which they abandoned Lille, Douai, and Orchies to France as security for a heavy war indemnity (£200,000).

Flanders, however, was given to Robert of Bethune (son of Guy of Dampierre) as a fief of the French crown. After ten years of intermittent fighting Gascony, Guienne (Aquitaine), and Flanders

Treaty of Yve-St-Bavon (1298)

Jacques de Châtillon

The Leiliaerts

The battle of Courtrai (1302)

The Treaty of Athies (1305)

were still outside of direct control. Mons-en-Puelle offered little consolation for Courtrai.

French foreign policy was active but not very productive in many other directions. Philip IV encouraged his brother Charles' candidacy for the Empire (vacant in 1308) and may even have had imperial ambitions himself. He got control of Lyons by supporting the burghers against their archbishop; extended French influence to the east by marrying his son Philip to Jeanne of Burgundy (*Franche-Comté*); negotiated with Norway, Serbia, and the Khan of the Mongols, and twice promised to go on Crusade, but with what sincerity is unknown.

By far the most dramatic and in many ways the most important event in the reign was the conflict between the crown and the papacy. Eighteen popes had worn the triple crown during the thirteenth century between the days of Innocent III and Boniface VIII, and while none exercised anything like Innocent's authority, none had seriously impaired the power of the papal see. If Innocent may be said to designate the high-water mark of the medieval papacy, Boniface without doubt, represents its collapse.

Benedict Gaetani, like Lothar Conti, was an astute and able lawyer. For years he had been active in the Roman *curia* and had attained the cardinalate. His opportunity came during the pontificate of Celestine V, a hermit of saintly character but totally unfitted for such an important office as the papacy had become by the end of the thirteenth century. No one realized this more than Celestine himself, and after a few months of harassed effort to be other than he was, he eagerly listened to Benedict's suggestion to surrender the keys that could both loose and bind. The college of cardinals thereupon elected Benedict, who took the title of Boniface VIII (December 21, 1294).

Had Benedict been made Pope earlier in the century it is possible that he might have done credit to the office, for he was able. But he was now approaching his eightieth year and age had but added irascibility and stubbornness to a natural arrogance and pride. He believed in the infallibility of the canon law and wished to actualize the far-reaching claims of Hildebrand and Innocent III, for he possessed the ambition of the one and the legal acuteness of the other. But he overlooked or ignored the fact that Europe had changed and was changing; that something like national governments were evolving in England and France which might resent the

*Philip IV
and
Boniface VIII*

Boniface VIII

interference of the Head of the Church in matters which seemed to be of purely local and temporal concern. The universalism of Rome was threatened by the awakening consciousness of nationhood.

Of this Boniface took no heed. He celebrated his entry into Rome with an ostentation significant of the change which had overtaken the "servant of the servants of God" and characteristic of his whole pontificate.

The quarrel between Boniface and Philip IV arose out of the financial embarrassments of the French crown but involved the never-to-be-settled problem of the proper relationship between Church and State. To finance his campaigns against England Philip had levied a tax upon the French clergy, but this action of the French king was in no way unprecedented. Indeed, Philip, his father, and his grandfather had all received papal approval for such exactions, although in each previous instance the excuse of a Crusade had been present. The power to tax means the power to destroy, and Boniface may be excused for listening to the complaints which the Cistercian Order raised in behalf of the Gallican Church. On the other hand Philip could argue, as did Edward of England, that if the Church looked to the State for protection, the State might look to the Church for support.

In February, 1296, Boniface threw out a challenge to the kings of Europe in the Bull *Clericis laicos*, which forbade under pain of excommunication the levying of taxes upon, or their payment by, the clergy without the express sanction of the Holy See.

"... we decree that if any bishops or clergy, regular or secular, of any grade, condition, or rank, shall pay, or promise, or consent to pay to laymen any contributions, or taxes, or the tenth, or the twentieth, or the hundredth, or any other part of their income or of their possessions, or of their value, real or estimated, under the name of aid, or loan, or subvention, or subsidy, or gift, or under any other name or pretext, without the permission of the pope, they shall, by the very act, incur the sentence of excommunication. And we also decree that emperors, kings, princes, dukes, counts, barons, podesta, capitanei, and governors of cities, fortresses, and of all other places everywhere, by whatever names such governors may be called, and all other persons of whatever power, condition, or rank, who shall impose, demand, or receive such taxes, ... shall by that very act incur the sentence of excommunication."¹

*The problem
of finance*

Clericis laicos
(1206)

¹ Thatcher and McNeal, *A Source Book for Mediæval History*, p. 312.

To this Philip replied (August, 1296) by forbidding the exportation of gold and silver from France, thereby causing a considerable shortage in the papal revenues. Edward of England adopted the expedient of classifying the clergy as outlaws, a method which speedily brought the English Church to submission.

For a year or more something like a literary war was waged between France and Rome. Political theorists, secure of royal protection, attacked the papal claims of supremacy over all laymen, and in such pamphlets as *A Disputation between a Cleric and a Knight* and *The Twofold Prerogative* by John of Paris asserted the necessity of noninterference by the Church in temporal matters and laid the foundations upon which Jean Bodin built his doctrine of "Sovereignty" some two centuries later. Lawyers, such as William Nogaret, Peter Flotte, and Peter Dubois, found ample material in the Roman law to buttress their arguments in support of the State. Authors of *fabliaux* found in the clergy a never-failing target for their humor, satire, or malevolence.

Boniface, busy enough with his Sicilian enemies to the south and with the rival family of Colonna in Rome itself, retreated step by step from the advanced position he had taken in *Clericis laicos*. Three papal bulls mark the course of his retreat. On September 20, 1296, he sent to Philip the Bull *Ineffabilis amor*, in which he explained that he had never intended to prevent the taxation of the clergy when the defense of the realm was at stake but was merely protesting against the arbitrary mulcting of the Church. There was little of "unutterable love" in the language of this bull. On February 7, 1297, by the Bull *Romana mater*, Boniface permitted Philip to receive voluntary contributions offered by the clergy in times of pressing necessity. Six months later (July 31) the Bull *Etsi de statu* virtually nullified the restrictions of *Clericis laicos*, for it permitted the King of France to judge for himself when the defense of the realm required the taxing of the clergy, and waived the necessity of obtaining papal approval in such cases. The Battle of the Tithes had ended in a papal defeat.

There may be a certain virtue in not knowing when you are beaten, but this quality, which Boniface possessed, is not to be recommended in one who aspires to be a statesman. Boniface had retreated, but only to prepare a more astounding attack upon lay society. The year 1300 was declared a "Jubilee" year, and Rome was thronged with thousands of the devout and the curious. Boniface could not

Pamphlet war

Ineffabilis
amor (1296)

Romana
Mater (1297)

Etsi de statu
(1297)

Ausculta fili
(1301)

Deum time

Unam sanctam
(1303)

resist the opportunity to impress the mighty gathering of Christians from every point in Europe with the power, authority, and "grandeur that was Rome." On December 5, 1301, appeared the Bull *Ausculta fili*, in which Boniface declared that God had established the popes above all kings, reproved Philip for maladministration and uttering false coinage, and called a general council for November of 1302. Tradition has it that this bull was burned either with the royal approval or accidentally by the impulsive Robert of Artois. However, a copy would do just as well, and the French government prepared a forged bull, called indifferently the *Deum time* or *Scire te volumus*, which preserved the claims of the Pope but which was couched in language calculated to arouse the indignation of all loyal servitors (Shades of Bismarck and the Ems Despatch!) To impress the Pope with the solidity of French resistance to papal claims of superiority over temporal rulers, Philip called a meeting of the States-General (April 11, 1302). This famous gathering of nobles, clergy, and representatives of the towns approved the official speeches, in which the royal lawyers asserted the independence of royal power from papal authority, and the clergy asked to be excused from attendance at the general council.

Boniface replied in the Bull *Unam sanctam* (June, 1303), one of the most amazing documents of all time. In it he departed from his predecessors only in pushing long recognized premises to their utter conclusion and giving the stamp of an official *pronunciamento* to what had been implicit in earlier declarations. By it *all* human beings are declared subject to the Pope, and the State is reduced to the rôle of a subordinate, if honored, agent of the Church. But let the document speak for itself:

"... Therefore there is one body of the one and only Church, and one head, not two heads, as if the Church were a monstrosity. And this head is Christ and his vicar, Peter and his successor. . . . By the words of the Gospel we are taught that the two swords, namely, the spiritual authority and the temporal are in the power of the Church. . . . The former is to be used by the Church, the latter for the Church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the command and permission of the priest. Moreover, it is necessary for one sword to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subjected to the spiritual. . . . Therefore, if the temporal power err, it will be judged by the spiritual power, and if the lower spiritual power err, it will be judged by its

superior. But if the highest spiritual power err, it can not be judged by men, but by God alone. . . . We therefore declare, say and affirm that submission on the part of every man to the Bishop of Rome is altogether necessary for his salvation.”²

Papal claims could go no further. It has been said that *Unam sanctam* was occasioned by the returning confidence which Boniface experienced after the French catastrophe at Courtrai. But Boniface was not the man to consider the immediate effects of his declarations. The bull affected all Christendom and was, after all, only the clearest expression of claims hinted at for centuries. But the fourteenth century was not the time to publish theories which the facts all too obviously denied.

Unam sanctam was Boniface's greatest blow. The quarrel with France dragged itself out for another year, but the story is one of continued threats and deeds of violence. The end came quickly, unexpectedly, disgracefully. William of Nogaret seems to have been the dark villain and evil genius of Philip's court, and he, with Sciarra Colonna, engineered the crime of Anagni. For years William had been the most vigorous of the advocates of the royal prerogative and it may well have been he who suggested to Philip the calling of a general council to limit the activities of an overambitious pontiff. His favorite offensive weapons were vituperation and the accumulation of charges of no matter what from no matter where or whom. But in 1303 he acted out of character and won eternal ignominy. From Philip IV he procured for himself and Sciarra a blanket commission to go anywhere and do anything for the good of the kingdom. They went to Italy with some six hundred horsemen and found that Boniface was in residence at his palace at Anagni. To Anagni they proceeded, swept into the town, burst into the palace, and took the aged pontiff prisoner, September 7. The good townsmen recovered from their amazement two days later and drove out the ruffians from France, but Boniface was broken by the shock and the humiliation. He died on the eleventh of October, a prisoner in Rome. Dante, who had little respect for Benedict Gaetani, truly expressed the universal indignation aroused by this insult to the head of the Church when he wrote:

“I see to Alagna [Anagni] come the Fleur-de-lys,
And in His vicar's person Christ made captive.

*The dark deed
at Anagni
(1303)*

² Thatcher and McNeal, *A Source Book for Mediæval History*, pp. 316-317.

I see Him to be mocked a second time;
 I see the vinegar and gall renewed,
 And Him 'twixt living robbers put to death."

[*Purgatorio* XX, 86-90.]

With Boniface the great days of the medieval papacy came to an end. Never again was it to be possible for a successor of St Peter to urge a claim over the bodies as over the souls of men. It was impossible for Dante to be fair in making an estimate of Boniface; it is difficult for us. The defects of his character are all too obvious and screen the real merits he possessed. He was constantly tactless, obstinate, furious in temper, and arrogant; a trafficker in the goods of the Church for the benefit of his family. He acted precipitately and with a malevolence that was madness or senility, as when he leveled Palestina to satisfy a private vengeance, prohibited the teaching of rhetoric at the universities, or excommunicated his enemies. On the other hand he was a man of unquestioned ability, a lawyer of unusual astuteness, and an organizer in an age of disorganization. His misfortune lay in being an anachronism, for he was a twelfth century Pope in fourteenth century Europe. To live in advance of one's age (as Frederick II) is as fatal as to live behind it, but one has at least a better chance of sympathetic treatment by posterity. Boniface has few advocates.

Philip IV had emerged victorious from his conflict with the papacy, whatever may be thought of the methods he employed. But he was not yet through with Boniface. The affair at Anagni was universally condemned, and Philip felt it necessary to offer Europe some explanation of his own part in the business and to free William of Nogaret from the ban of excommunication which had been directed against him. Benedict XI, who, as Boniface's successor, held the papacy only for a few months, rejected all requests to pardon the guilty councilor. Clement V, however, was more tractable, partly by reason of his character, partly because of the circumstances of his election. Clement V had been the Archbishop of Bordeaux and reached the papal chair through the influence of the French Church and possibly through the influence of the French king. Furthermore, either by chance or design he decided to make Lyons his headquarters and so added the advantages of geography to other assets in the hands of the French court. This was the beginning of the so-called "Babylonian Captivity," marked by an unbroken series of French popes with continued residence at Avignon in Provence.

Whether Philip had conceived the idea of a French Pope living in a (practically) French town as an effective means of controlling the papacy or not, he did not fail to take advantage of the situation. The only means to win condonation for the attack upon Boniface was to convince Europe that the Pope was such a deep-dyed villain that any method which would free the Church from such a monster might be justified. No one was better equipped to prepare such an exposition than William of Nogaret, a veritable "Man with the Muck-rake." All the old accusations which he presented in 1302 were revised, reëdited, and marvelously enlarged. Boniface, according to the testimony, was a simoniac, a nepotist, a heretic who denied the immortality of the soul, a magician, and a false pope. A list of forty-three charges was presented to Clement V with the request (or command) to find a "true bill" and declare his pontificate invalid.

*The attack on
the dead*

Clement was in a quandary. He recognized the fictitious nature of the evidence, but lacked the courage to give a direct refusal to the French king. For years he delayed his decision, until the French attack upon the Order of the Templars gave him an opportunity to compromise. In 1311 he issued the Bull *Rex gloriae virtutum*, in which he declared that Philip's activities against Boniface had been actuated by a zeal "good and just." The following year, at the Council of Vienne, Boniface was held a legitimate Pope and the charges of heresy were declared to be without foundation.

*Rex gloriae
(1311)*

The Templars had saved the character of Boniface, but this is the only creditable result of a thoroughly disreputable business. Philip IV had discovered that the traditional sources of revenue were quite inadequate to meet the expenses of a government which was constantly increasing the field of its operations. More money had to be raised, by legal spoliation if no other way could be found. In 1306 the Jews had been expelled from the kingdom and a considerable proportion of their wealth confiscated by the crown. A few years later the Lombards — nearly as unpopular and reputedly as wealthy as the Jews — were subjected to similar treatment. Lack of funds or simple avarice brought about the downfall of the Templars.

The Templars

It need not be argued again that the Military Orders which had sprung into being after the First Crusade had lost their original *raison d'être* with the collapse of the crusading movement. While

Their crime

the German Orders went crusading against the infidel Slavs and the Hospitallers defended the island of Rhodes against the Crescent, the Templars had retired from anything which could reasonably be called warfare. But they were still military and were still an Order, and as such might be regarded as a menace to government, though the very extensiveness of the Order would make difficult any organized opposition to a "national" State. But they were unpopular and, in the opinion of the vulgar at least, had so far forgotten their original discipline that "to drink like a Templar" became a recognized simile. The veil of secrecy and mystery which the members jealously drew about their Order permitted their enemies to spread tales of orgiastic rites which the uninitiated were ready to accept. Most fatal thing of all was their reputed wealth. For generations their Temples had served as depositories for private fortunes and public treasure; the Order had acted as the accredited financial agent of the papacy and from time to time had made loans (never very large ones) to the kings of England and France. An unpopular, mysterious financier is a potential scapegoat, and the Templars proved no exception. It is well to note that while the Hospitallers were also unpopular, their Order was neither secret nor financially so active. It survived.

The attack on the Templars was launched in 1307 under the direction of the unspeakable Nogaret. The old story was repeated — charges of heresy, indecency, immorality, sacrilege, and treason; supported only by the imagination, the testimony of doubtful witnesses, or confessions extorted by such tortures as would make a man admit that he had slain God. Clement V struggled weakly to save the Order but abandoned it to save the memory of Boniface. The Bull *Vox in excelso* (April 3, 1312) suppressed the Templars. Philip IV seized the property of the Order and bestowed it, at a price, upon the Hospitallers. The head of the Order, Jacques de Molay, with a few influential companions, was burned on the bank of the Seine.

Less dramatic and far less sordid than the legal chicanery employed against Edward of England, Boniface, and the Templars was the positive development of governmental centralization under Philip IV. It matters little whether the guiding hand was that of the king or his advisory council. There is little that is new in Philip's government, but there is much that is improved. In his reign the institutions which had begun to take shape under his

predecessors assumed a form which remained fundamental throughout the rest of the medieval period.

The principle of the "division of labor" had already been at work in breaking up the old *Curia Regis* into a number of departments. Under Philip IV the *Curia* was made a thoroughly professional body to the exclusion of amateurs from the Church or the nobility and became—for purposes of administration—three *curias*, although for special business the three might assemble in a *curia generalis*. The *curia in concilio* functioned as a modern chancery and dealt with important matters of State; the *curia in parlamento* became the chief judicial body in the realm with its *chambre des requêtes*, which decided lesser cases of first instance, its *chambre des enquêtes*, which received and prepared for consideration all appeals from the lower courts, a *Grand Chambre*, which heard all important appeals and acted as a court of first instance in cases involving peers of the realm or royal officials, and a *cour des aides* which specialized in feudal finance; finally, a *curia in compotis* (*chambre des comptes*) administered all matters of royal finance not falling within the jurisdiction of the *cour des aides*.

The royal domain was divided into thirty-five *baillages*, each under a royal official responsible to a royal commissioner and each with representation in the provincial parliaments, which were meeting with increasing frequency and regularity.

One of the most interesting events of the reign was the summoning of the States-General in 1302. There is considerable doubt as to whether this was the first meeting of the famous body, but there is no definite record of any previous gathering. The States-General was a development rather than an innovation. The kings of France had long been in the habit of calling *curiae generales* of influential men to seek their counsel and advice. Such assemblies had been made up largely if not entirely of nobles and churchmen, although St Louis had consulted the burghers of the towns upon matters of finance. Philip IV had summoned a general assembly of some sort in 1290, to discuss the points at issue with the kingdom of Aragon. What is unique about the meeting of 1302 is the fact that it is *known* that the representation was divided among the clergy, the nobility, and the Third Estate or the bourgeoisie. The assembly of 1302 was in no sense an example of parliamentary government, and in no real sense does it mark the beginning of popular participation in the management of the State. The very names "States-

Further
division of
the Curia
Regis

The States-
General of
1302

General" and "Third Estate" are the coinage of a later generation. The assembly met to give (on demand) its approval to the antipapal policy of the king. It listened to the official speeches but was given no opportunity to debate. Its members assembled as a duty and not of right, and with the vote of acquiescence their functions ended.

A national assembly so controlled was a political asset of considerable importance, and Philip IV made use of it on several other occasions when he needed to give the impression that the government had the confidence of the nation. In 1308 the States-General approved the proceedings against the Templars and in 1312 repeated their endorsement of the royal policy. But in 1314, on the eve of a projected campaign into Flanders, Philip ordered the States-General to give a promise of financial aid. Here was an innovation and here was an opportunity for the "States" to bargain with the king at least concerning the amount and method of the levy. But the occasion passed, and the court lawyers took advantage of this blanket approval to raise the money in their own way.

Its activity
Legislation

The reign of Philip IV produced an amazing amount of legislation even when the number of lawyers who formed the court is considered. Some of this was hasty in character but a great deal of it was good. Particular ingenuity was shown in devising new ways of increasing the revenue. In addition to feudal aids, "gifts," and loans contracted from the Florentine bankers, the State legislated money from the coffers of the nobles and the purses of the bourgeoisie. The nobility was subjected to a land tax; the towns and all corporations paid an annual sum to the royal treasury. Indirect taxation was extended; duties were levied on goods exported or imported into the royal domain; a particularly annoying tax, the *maltôte*, was exacted on all commercial transactions. The rapid fluctuations in the relative value of gold and silver and the presence of seigniorial coinage led the government to determine the value of coins, which it did with such frequency that Philip IV has acquired a reputation as a debaser of the currency and a "false-moneyer."

Philip tried, without much success, to establish a uniform system of weights and measures and to encourage French agriculture and industry. He met with better fortune in his efforts to reform the military organization and to bring about much-needed legislation limiting the feudal right of private war. The obligation of forty

days' military service was done away with, and the principle adopted that in case of need every man in the kingdom could be called upon, with the option of commuting personal attendance by a money payment, a practice which permitted the creation of a standing army. Furthermore, royal officials seized every occasion to weaken the baronial courts by a liberal interpretation of the *cas royaux*, or cases reserved for the royal courts.

This expansion of government activity and centralization of authority did not fail to arouse opposition. The churchmen complained of oppression, the nobles cried "Privilege," and the burgher cursed his taxes and sighed for the good old days when St Louis was King of France. Leagues of malcontent nobles and burghers sprang up in Normandy, Burgundy, and Champagne, and had made some headway when Philip IV died (November 29, 1314) and left other problems for solution.

Philip IV left behind him three sons, a daughter, and a nation which had to be cajoled into offering public prayers for his soul. With three sons remaining the Capetian dynasty seemed destined for long years of rule. Fourteen years, however, sufficed to bring the direct line to an end and to transfer the crown to the House of Valois.

Louis X, surnamed "the Quarrelsome," lived but two years, continuing the policy of his father and maintaining internal peace by tactful negotiation with the baronial leagues. At his death in 1316 he left a daughter Jeanne and a pregnant widow. France had never been ruled by a queen and the question of inheritance was raised for the first time in over three centuries. For the moment the difficulty was postponed, for Louis' brother, Philip "the Long," assumed a regency until the posthumous child should be born. Five months later the widowed queen gave birth to a son, John, but the death of this little infant within a few days revived the claims of Jeanne to the crown of France.

Philip, who had enjoyed five months of royalty, was indisposed to surrender his power and position and claimed the crown for himself. He won the support of the Count of Burgundy by granting him the reversion of Franche-Comté and relied upon the royal jurists to meet the moral claims of Jeanne with legal technicalities. The men of law rose, somewhat ungallantly, to the occasion; they resurrected the time-honored laws of the Salian Franks, which expressly excluded women from inheriting any portion of Salic land, and

Disaffection

Louis X
(1314-1316)

*The problem
of inheritance*

The Salic law

declared this useful section equally applicable to the inheritance of the French crown. After a show of opposition by the partisans of Jeanne to this obvious *non sequitur*, the States-General summoned for the purpose gave a complacent approval, and the descendants of Jeanne were compelled to wait two centuries before they could assume the crown of France.

Philip, now fifth of the name, ruled France ably for the next six years. He leaned heavily on his lawyers, and frequently consulted with his people on matters of public concern. He attempted to further his father's efforts to unify the coinage and to establish standards of weights and measurement. Under him the menace of the baronial leagues evaporated, rather because of internal friction and the inability of nobles and commoners to overcome their mutual jealousies than because of any aggressive policy upon the part of the king. When Philip V died (1322), only four nobles, the Duke of Aquitaine (as King of England), the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy, and the Count of Flanders, were in a position to cause serious embarrassment to the King of France.

Philip V left four daughters, but the law which had served the father worked against the children, and the crown passed, uncontested, to their uncle, Charles IV. Four years of inglorious reign, marked by unjust aggression in Aquitaine and an almost criminal connivance at the plots of his sister Isabelle and her paramour Roger Mortimer, brought the direct male line of Hugh Capet to an end. Charles died in 1328, leaving only a daughter, and the precedents of 1314, 1316, and 1322 opened the way to Philip of Valois, nephew of Philip the Fair.

When the Capetian dynasty flickered out, France was still in the long process of adjusting its social life to the changing times. Indeed, society was more unstable than at the beginning of the preceding century, for old habits were giving way while new ones were still in the process of formation. Maladjustment is a constant accompaniment of periods of transition, and in nothing is it more manifest than in moral standards. The attacks of Philip IV upon Boniface alive and Boniface dead had not only prejudiced the respect in which men had held the papacy, but served as an invitation to all malcontents to attack the defects and foibles of the priesthood. A discredited Church, which is made the butt of coarse wit and the target for the shafts of satire, can exercise but slight control over the private lives of the laymen and finds that discipline grows lax

Philip V
(1316-1322)

Charles IV
(1322-1328)

*France at the
beginning of
the fourteenth
century*

even among its own members. The courts of the last Capetians *Moral decay* reeked with sordid scandal, true or false, and few of the notable ones died without starting a suspicion of murder. The reputed infidelities of the daughters-in-law of Philip IV provided the basis for the black legends of the Tour de Nesle; William of Nogaret was suspected as an accessory in the alleged poisoning of Benedict XI; rumor denied a natural death to Philip IV and to his son Louis; the premature death of John was attributed to a needle driven into the brain; and Edward III of England was obliged to imprison for life his mother, the daughter of Philip IV, for conduct unbefitting a lady. Witchcraft and diabolism had an amazing popularity, and Boniface was charged with the possession of a private demon.

But in other ways the world was looking up. There were more schools in more towns and villages than ever before or even than there were to be in the eighteenth century. The universities were flourishing and popular. People were taking an interest in the world about them; and learned, though not scientific, men found an eager public for their books on the quaint ways of beasts or the magical properties of herbs and stones. *Fabliaux* and poems depicting the virtues and vices of the middle classes began to take the place of the heroic epics so popular in the twelfth century. Architecture settled down into the standard style known as the *opus francigenum*, at the expense of the exhilarant individualism of the mid-thirteenth century. But stained glass was coming into its own and with it the statuary which was leaving the symbolic for the realistic. To this changing France came the Hundred Years' War.

*Intellectual
curiosity*

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CHAPTER XXIV

NORMAN AND ANGEVIN ENGLAND

*The decisive-
ness of Battle*

THE reign of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England passed into twilight as the shadows lengthened over the Sussex downs on the afternoon of October 16, 1066. William, who when that day's sun had risen had been only the Duke of Normandy, retired at night with a reasonable assurance that the crown of England would soon be his. The military victory which he had just won at Battle (Senlac) did not, of itself, explain this confidence, for rarely did one battle win a country for an invader, though one battle might easily lose it, and the Duke's little army of five thousand mercenary adventurers was small indeed to conquer a population of two and a half millions. William's confidence was due to the known fact that Harold, king of the English, and his two brothers had been slain on the field of battle. He appreciated, furthermore, that for years the Anglo-Saxon thegns had been conspicuous for their mutual jealousies, their willingness to increase their personal influence at the expense of any principle and with the aid of any person, and, in consequence, that there was little likelihood of any united resistance. England had potential armies which conceivably could have reversed, or neutralized, the defeat at Senlac, but England had no leaders to put these armies in the field. It was the chance flight of the arrow which killed Harold Godwine that determined the future course of English history.

By Christmas time William had received the submission of London and on Christmas day was consecrated king at Westminster. Most of England accepted the Conquest without serious opposition, though the city of Exeter made a show of loyalty to the cause of the widowed queen, and an insane harrying of the North and West by William, in revenge for anti-Norman demonstrations, revealed that Englishmen could and would resist if someone would only lead them.

*The effect of
the Conquest*

The change of rulers had little direct effect upon the great mass of the people, though the Conquest was critical in the history of the island. Economically, Norman England was very like Saxon Eng-

land; the manors were operated as they had been for generations, and the English farmer continued to cultivate his familiar strips of ground. The merchant, the craftsman, the worker in glass, iron, or stone undoubtedly welcomed the change, for England was now pulled by a centripetal force toward the center of European commerce; while abbeys, churches, and castles, built in the Norman style, provided work for the unskilled and inspiration for the artistic.

Politically and socially, the Conquest was all-important, for with the Normans came Norman feudalism, drastically changing English institutions, though not without some modification to itself. At the time of his coronation William had taken an oath to protect the Church, to maintain the laws of England, and to uphold justice throughout the land. The new king had very distinct ideas concerning the duties and rights of royalty. He had no intention of oppressing the people who had become his subjects, and even less of allowing himself to be a king only in name. As Duke of Normandy he had, after a struggle, brought his vassals and subvassals under his immediate control. He adopted the same policy in England. At an assembly of barons and knights held on Salisbury Plain in 1086, William exacted an oath of direct obedience from all landholders of substance, great and small.

The failure of the English to maintain a continued resistance freed William from the distasteful necessity of bargaining with Saxon earls or thegns for terms of submission. One of the generally accepted principles of continental feudalism was that no land should remain without a lord, which was as much as to say that land was not to be held by absolute title, but on conditions of service whether predial or feudal. Saxon England had many freeholders; earls and thegns, freemen, monasteries, and villages, and the continental system could not be applied to England without a serious dislocation of social customs and political institutions. But the system was applied.

William had to provide land for the warriors who had supported him in his adventurous undertaking. The crown lands and the extensive holdings of the Godwine family were declared automatically forfeited to the Conqueror, and the greater number of Saxon estates were seized as enemy property, though some of the original holders were permitted to retain their lands upon payment of a fine. In consequence, the necessity of seeing that there should be no Norman lord without land harmonized so well with the principle of no land

*William as
king*

*No land
without
a lord*

*No lord
without
land*

without a lord, that nearly every acre of English soil was in the hands of the king or of vassals responsible to him for their land and its occupants. The piecemeal nature of the Conquest and a succession of donations prevented, with few exceptions, the creation of great compact fiefs, such as in France threatened the power of the Crown. William further reduced the danger of decentralization so inherent in feudalism, by the retention of English institutions. The Anglo-Saxon *fyrd*, or militia, to which freemen of every rank owed service, was maintained, and it precluded a monopolization of the military forces by the barons; the shire reeve, or sheriff, the county agent of Saxon kings, was retained as a crown official and a check upon the local nobility; the shire and hundred courts were continued, blocking an exaggerated extention of feudal jurisdiction and providing a medium of communication between the central and local governments.

Indeed, the growth of the rule of law and the crystallization of administrative and legislative institutions gave to the monarchy and to society in England a uniqueness, emphasized by its insular position. Saxon kings at the time of their coronation had taken an oath to protect the interests of the Church, to maintain the laws, and to enforce peace and justice. William the Conqueror had similarly committed himself, while his son Henry I (1100-1135) went somewhat further. A few days after his coronation he issued a charter which guaranteed the rectification of general abuses and the maintenance of such English laws as had escaped modification under the Conqueror.

Henry attempted to reduce the diversities of Saxon and Danish law and the variants of local custom to somewhat of uniformity; he ordered a record of verdicts to be kept as precedents for future cases, and by sending his judges about the shires he not only emphasized the importance of the shire courts, but increased the respect in which men held the agents of this "Lion of Justice." By marrying Matilda (née Edith), a descendant of Edward the Confessor, Henry won the approval of his English subjects, and by conquering Normandy as a result of the battle of Tenchebrai (1106) permitted Englishmen to enjoy the harmless illusion that Senlac had been avenged.

It was a misfortune for England that Henry's son was drowned (1120) as the *White Ship* with its drunken crew foundered on a Channel reef. The gruff barons did not take kindly to the prospect

of an English queen, even though Henry's daughter Matilda had been an empress, and they permitted the Conqueror's grandson, Stephen of Blois, to make a bid for the English crown. For nineteen years (1135-1154) civil war engaged the activities and embarrassed the allegiance of the barons; "Christ and His Saints slept," and the reforms of Henry I fell into abeyance. But in 1153 a second Henry, son of Matilda and her second husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, came to England to support his mother's claims and his own. Stephen agreed to share his power with Henry and to recognize the Angevin as his successor. Within the year, Henry of Anjou was Henry II of England.

Henry II resembled both his grandfather and great-grandfather in appearance and ability and his father in temper. Birth, fortune, and marriage had made him King of England and Ireland (1171), overlord of Scotland (1174), and lord of a third of France. Normandy and Maine were subject to the English crown since Tencobrai; Anjou was his paternal heritage, while the great region from the Loire to the Pyrenees, Guienne, and Gascony came to him when he married Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII of France. He was a man of tremendous energy, of universal interest, and of ungovernable passion. Important as were the complications resulting from the French possessions, the political development which marks his reign in England is of even greater moment.

Henry II could find both precedent and inspiration in the work begun by Henry I. It was essential in the interests of effective central government to prevent local magnates from becoming petty princes. This was, in part, accomplished by the creation of civil servants trained in the performance of functions often seized by continental lords; in part by a reliance upon the shire courts and in part by an improvement in the efficiency of the king's council. A feature common to all European monarchies was the *Curia Regis*, or King's Council. In effect, the *Curia* was two *curiae*. There was a permanent council of intimate advisers and crown officials who attended to the routine business of administration, the real *Curia Regis*; and there was an occasional council composed of all the prelates and barons who owed direct service to the king — the Great Council (*Magnum Concilium*, *Commune Concilium*), summoned in times of emergency or for consultation on matters of public policy. From the *Curia Regis* developed the various departments of crown administration; from the *Magnum Concilium*, the House of Lords.

Henry II
(1154-1189)

The Curia
Regis

Subdivides

In the reign of Henry II, the *Curia Regis* began to break up into departments for specific duties, although it did not lose its identity and at any time could assemble as the King's Council. But there was a distinct tendency for certain of the crown officials to limit their activities to the trial of cases involving the crown, for others to judge disputes between subject and subject, and for the rest to concern themselves primarily with the finances of the realm. In other words, the *Curia* was subdividing into the Court of King's Bench, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Court of the Exchequer. Increased efficiency at the seat of government was matched by increased efficiency in the general administration. To keep close watch on the sheriffs and the activities of the barons, to supervise and check the collection of taxes, to facilitate the administration of justice, and to prevent cases belonging to the royal court from being tried in the courts of barons, it became the practice for the *Curia* to send its justices on circuit through the shires. In each shire court the justices met the sheriff, consulted with him upon local problems, and, in the trial of cases where local evidence was essential, made use of a jury of trustworthy residents who gave, on oath, such information as they could. From the carefully recorded decisions of these itinerant justices and the general principles derived therefrom, grew the common law of England.

With this improvement of legal machinery it is not surprising that Henry's reign witnessed considerable legislative activity. A uniform system of coinage was decreed, and commutation of military service by the payment of a tax (*scutage* = shield money) was encouraged. The Assize of Arms (1181) required each freeman to maintain his own military equipment and be ready for service at summons, making the *fyrd* a legal institution and freeing the king from many of the disadvantages of feudal levies.

It was well for England that Henry II had built up an efficient administration, for her next two kings were indifferent to, or contemptuous of, her governmental needs and general welfare. Richard I (1189-1199) was busy winning personal fame abroad, so that the country was, perforce, administered by the trained officials of his father. That the government stood and survived the tremendous task of raising about \$10,000,000 for the king's ransom is a fitting tribute to the work of Henry II. Under John (1199-1216) the past again controlled the present, for the Magna Carta was a protest against innovation. King John possessed unusual military and

Richard I
(1189-1199)*John I*
(1199-1216)

diplomatic ability, and might have been a great king had he not been a selfish, deceitful, and indolent man. The consummate failure of his reign is due as much to his complete disregard for what his subjects considered to be his duty, as to the strength of his powerful adversaries, Philip Augustus and Innocent III. His failure to administer justice, his irregularities in raising funds, his personal viciousness outraged his subjects, great and small; and when to these was added the national disgust at the loss of Normandy and the general humiliation when the king surrendered his kingdom to the Pope, the wonder is that effective rebellion was so long delayed. The defeat at Bouvines, however, gave courage to the growing party of opposition.

On June 17, 1215, at Runnymede, a little island in the Thames near Windsor, John affixed his seal to the document known to all Englishmen as the Great Charter. Sixty-three clauses revealed the abuses of kingship and the rights that freemen might claim. There was little in *Magna Carta* that was new, there was much that was old. It is curious, perhaps, that nowhere in his *King John* does Shakespeare refer to this famous document. The significance of the Charter lies in the fact that what had long been regarded as customs were now designated as rights. The liberty of the subject must be respected by the king. Two of the clauses exercised an amazing effect upon the future of Englishmen and, indirectly, of Americans. Clause Twelve proclaimed that "no scutage or aid is to be levied upon our kingdom except by the common counsel of our kingdom"; clause Thirty-nine declared that "no free man is to be taken or imprisoned or disseised or outlawed or in any way destroyed, nor will we go against him nor will we send against him, except by the legal judgment of his equals or by the law of the land." From the first grew the predominant power of the House of Commons, confirmed by the Parliament Bill of 1911; from the second has developed the protection of "due process of law."

John's death (1216) left the kingdom to the nine-year-old Henry III, the "king with the waxen heart." Henry III has acquired a reputation for piety and hopeless inefficiency. To make matters worse, a veritable horde of foreigners had come to England with his Poitevin mother and his Provençal wife, and had fattened on his excessive generosity. Henry's ambitions would have done credit to a Valois, for they were magnificent and expensive. He desired to regain the lost regions of France, to put a brother and a

Magna Carta

Importance

Henry III
(1216-1272)

son upon European thrones, and to provide comfortable pensions for his countless relatives. Every class in England enjoyed the rare experience of a common grievance and found a rarer spokesman in the *Magnum Concilium*.

In 1258, a "Parliament" of barons under Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester (and, incidentally, a foreigner), assembled at Oxford and compelled the king to subscribe the Provisions of Oxford. As a result of this agreement, the direction of the government was entrusted to a committee of fifteen barons, responsible to a larger committee of twenty-four. But the barons failed either to work in harmony or to win the confidence of the nation. Henry III repudiated the Provisions in 1261 and hurled the country into civil war. In 1264 Simon and his barons defeated and captured the king at Lewes. For the rest of the year, Simon was the untitled King of England.

Simon de Montfort's "Parliament" (1265)

In January, 1265, assembled the famous De Montfort "Parliament," the first really national body to meet in England. Strictly speaking, it was rather a political convention than a representative assembly, for the members were chosen with some care. To the ordinary members of the *Magnum Concilium* were now added two knights from each shire and two burgesses from a selected number of boroughs, known to favor the De Montfort party. Within a year Henry's son, Edward, succeeded in putting himself at the head of a party opposed to the dictatorial methods of Earl Simon and overwhelmed the forces of the reformer at the battle of Evesham (1265).

The Parliament which Simon de Montfort had summoned in 1265 was not particularly unusual. Kings had frequently called the *Magnum Concilium* which formed the nucleus of the national body; representation was in no way unfamiliar to the English or the Normans, for in the courts of the hundred and the shire each township was represented by its reeve and four men of good reputation (*quatuor meliores homines*). King John had employed this local custom when, in 1213, he commanded the sheriffs to send to St Albans four men and a reeve from every township on the royal demesne to consult with him in a financial emergency.

The Magnum Concilium

Magna Carta had, unsuspectingly, contributed to the development of the English Parliament. Clause Twelve, which prohibited unusual taxation without the consent of the Common Council of the realm, created a situation which demanded a change in the normal procedure. The Common Council (*Magnum Concilium*) was, by

the Charter, empowered to approve additional taxation, but taxation is most successful when approved by the greatest number. The *Magnum Concilium* normally consisted of scarce more than a hundred barons, and in consequence, when taxation was involved, it seemed advisable to enlarge the council by the addition of minor barons, i.e., the knights of the shire. From this procedure it was but a step to include the representatives of the towns. But nothing was done hastily; indeed, throughout the thirteenth century England was groping her way through the maze of political experimentation.

A general assembly of earls, barons, bishops, and abbots, calling itself a *Parliamentum generalissimum*, met at London in 1246, but this was only the old *Magnum Concilium* with a more sounding title. In 1254 Henry III ordered his sheriffs to supervise the election of two knights by every shire court, as general representatives to a council to discuss the financial situation. Hostile barons countered by summoning three elected knights to treat of the "common weal" at Windsor. The year 1264 witnessed the gathering of four knights from every shire to Parliament. To Simon's Parliament came two knights from the shires and two burgesses from twenty-one specified towns. Here was an innovation, for the Parliament of 1265 was the first in which the towns were brought into immediate conjunction with the barons and the knights of the shire.

The Parliament of 1265 was, in so far, an innovation, but it established no precedent, for no uniform membership can be found in the meetings of the next thirty years. In 1273 four knights from the shires and four burgesses from the towns met with the barons; ten years later the shires send their two knights, but only twenty-one towns are asked to send two "wise and fit" citizens. In the assemblies of 1290 and 1294 no citizens appeared. In 1295 Edward I called his so-termed "Model Parliament," issuing a personal summons to the higher clergy and to forty-nine earls and barons (a distinguishing characteristic of the House of Lords) and directing the sheriffs "without delay to be caused to be elected from the county two knights and from each borough two burgesses." Twenty years before, Edward had done much the same thing, though doubling the shire and borough representations, but he had in the meantime reverted to the older form of the *Magnum Concilium*.

Parliament was still only a single house, and a tripartite division into the three "Estates" of Clergy, Lords, and Commons seemed more likely than the eventual bicameral system. That Parliament

Parliamentary experiments

The "Model Parliament" (1295)

did so divide was due in part to the fact that the clergy preferred to sit by themselves in an independent parliament, or convocation, and in part to the practice of summoning the greater lords by personal writ, the knights of the shire and the burgesses being summoned by general writs to the sheriffs.

*Edward I
(1272-1307)*

The reign of Edward I (1272-1307) was marked by legislation of considerable importance. The *Quia Emptores* (1290) facilitated the sale of feudal properties, but required that the new owner become the immediate vassal of the king; the Statute of Mortmain (1279) prevented the acquisition of properties by corporations without the express approval of the crown; the *De Donis* (1285) restricted the transfer of land (otherwise than by sale) so that the holder was obliged to leave it to his heirs — the so-called system of "entail"; the Law of Acton Burnell (1283) assisted the creditor to recover his debts; writs of *Trailbaston* gave unusual powers to special justices to hunt down and punish marauding bands; the Statute of Winchester provided machinery for the better protection of the great towns.

Foreign policy

The continental interests of England had, by the nature of things, been mainly restricted to the defense of the royal lands in France and to the prevention of an excessive control over the English Church by the Bishop of Rome. The Norman Conquest inaugurated a quarrel with France which lasted intermittently until the middle of the fifteenth century. Rufus had warred against the French king, Henry I had conquered Normandy for England, and by the marriages of his children had prepared the way for the acquisition of Maine and Anjou; Henry II had added the great duchy of Aquitaine, which was nearly all that remained of the Angevin inheritance after the disastrous reign of John. Edward I had warred in Guienne, but succeeded in little more than preventing the duchy from falling into the hands of Philip IV of France.

But Edward had greater military success at home. For years the border land between Wales and England had known no peace, and the Welsh tribes had taken advantage of the weak reigns of Stephen and Henry III to assert their independence. Edward I undertook the conquest of Wales (1277-1282) and by the Statute of Rhuddlan (1284) Wales was annexed to the English crown, the modern shires of Anglesey, Carnarvon, and Merioneth being erected into a principality for the eldest son of the king. Edward's early successes in Scotland ended in failure, and the Scots remained an independent people throughout the rest of the Middle Ages.

The relation between the crown and the Church had been strained severely and often. The Conqueror had hoped to strike an even balance by granting the Church the right to try spiritual offenses in its own courts, while reserving to himself the authority to keep unwelcome papal legates from the country. The tactful conduct of William I and his ecclesiastical counterpart, Lanfranc, prevented any serious breach between Church and State. But Henry I found unexpected opposition to royal authority from the meek philosopher Anselm of Canterbury, who refused to take the customary oath of homage to the king. Though he had taken a similar oath to William Rufus, Anselm justified his resistance by appealing to the investiture decree of Gregory VII as reissued by Paschal II. After years of conflict the disputed points were settled by compromise (1107), along the lines of the later Concordat of Worms. Henry I agreed to drop his claim to the right of appointing to ecclesiastical offices, while Anselm took the oath for the temporalities of the see of Canterbury.

A more dramatic conflict enlivened the reign of Henry II. Henry attempted to remove certain obvious abuses which had resulted from the separation of the Church courts. Clerics, guilty of any crime, escaped the jurisdiction of the State. By the Constitutions of Clarendon (1164), Henry decreed that criminous clerics convicted by the Church courts should be handed over to the State for punishment. Thomas à Becket, Henry's erstwhile friend and now Archbishop of Canterbury, refused to accept the Constitutions as binding on the Church. The quarrel ended only with the murder of à Becket by four misguided knights, who hoped to win the king's favor by ridding him of "this troubrous priest." Though Henry II did penance at the martyr's tomb and restored the jurisdiction of the Church courts over criminous clerks, he was successful in removing to the royal *curia* all cases between clerics and laymen, which concerned property.

The English Church never succeeded in becoming independent of the State and never became completely dependent upon Rome. Edward I successfully resisted the *Clericis laicos* of Boniface VIII, and when the Parliaments of Edward III passed the Statute of Provisors (1351), nullifying papal appointments to English benefices, and the Statute of *Præmunire* (1353), prohibiting appeals to foreign courts, the English Church was virtually a national Church.

England was a prosperous country as the time approached for

Church and State

The Constitutions of Clarendon (1164)

her to enter the Hundred Years' War. English barons managed to find time to encourage the arts and to contribute funds toward the erection of the splendid cathedrals of which England may well be proud. The towns flourished under the stimulus of the lucrative woolen industry, for English wool was a *sine qua non* to the wealth of the Flemish cities. To control this industry the crown encouraged the formation of a trading corporation, known as the Merchants of the Staple, which gave way in the fifteenth century to the Merchant Adventurers, and to the great oversea companies of a later age. Not only the artisan and the merchant prospered, for the villein was on the road to becoming a yeoman. Landholders quickly discovered the unsatisfactory nature of compulsory field labor and were willing to commute it for a money payment. The Black Death speeded up a process that had long been under way. By the fifteenth century the English workman was independent enough to complain about his wages or the food supplied by his master, to talk about his rights, or to ask with the socialist preacher, John Ball:

“ When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the Gentleman? ”

The religious life of the people as well was stirred by this spirit of unrest. Dignified by the learning of Wyclif and by the sincerity of his Lollards, it made the way easier for the leaders of the Reformation.

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CHAPTER XXV

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

PHILIP OF VALOIS (1328-1350) succeeded to the crown of France as the representative of the male branch of the Capetian line. His cousin, the late king, had foreseen and approved this contingency, Jeanne declared herself satisfied with the kingdom of Navarre, and the nobles acquiesced in order to eliminate a more embarrassing candidate. The Salic law had given Philip the crown, but it could be argued that while that law excluded women from the throne it did not destroy the rights of their offspring. Women might, as the phrase ran, form a "bridge and plank" to a throne they were not permitted to possess. Under this interpretation Edward III of England, through his mother, Isabelle of France, had a stronger claim to the French crown than Philip of Valois. But the nobles, naturally averse to the accession of an English king, acted promptly, while Edward was only half-hearted in pressing his claim. For the moment at least, there was no contest for the crown.

Philip VI is but a shadowy figure, and what little is known of him suggests that he has small claim to be considered great. He had enough of piety to receive the title of "the very good Christian"; he enjoyed the reputation of being a wit; and he was a typical Valois, given to ostentation and in love with the frivolities of a knighthood which was not only in flower but was rapidly going to seed. He had no further policy than to continue in the path of his predecessors, and in this he was supported by the lawyers, the "lions under the throne." The fact that his wife, Jeanne of Burgundy, was familiar to contemporaries as the "male queen" may serve as a verdict on his ability.

The reign opened with the irony of victory. Philip invaded Flanders to assist Louis of Nevers against the "good towns" of Bruges, Ypres, and Cassel, which were in open revolt. On April 28, 1328, the feudal chivalry of France almost annihilated the rebels at Cassel; Louis was restored to his county and Philip took over the border towns of Lille, Tournai, and Orchies. Four years later

*Philip VI
(1328-1350)*

*The battle of
Cassel
(1328)*

he took the Cross and procured a crusading tithe from the clergy; but anything more serious was prevented by the outbreak of a conflict with England which, for no very good reason, has been called the Hundred Years' War.

War with England had been a constant factor in French history since the days of William the Conqueror; and so long as the King of England remained the vassal of the King of France for lands on the Continent, so long would Anglo-French relations rest "on the dangerous edge of things." The English kings naturally—if not wisely—wished to regain Normandy and the Angevin inheritance, the French kings naturally and wisely desired to put an end to the anomaly of an England in France. In Philip's day other matters than the problem of Guienne troubled the courts of England and of France.

Louis of Nevers and Flanders

Louis of Nevers and his French supporters ruled Flanders with ill-judged severity, and many Flemings made their way to England and hoped for the discomfiture of France. To make matters worse, Louis, at French suggestion, seized the goods and persons of English merchants within his county. Edward III replied by prohibiting the exportation of wool to Flanders (1336) and precipitated a crisis.

Jacques van Artevelde

The wealth of Flanders was founded upon the manufacture of cloth, and without wool the industry collapsed. Edward's decree threw thousands of Flemings out of employment, and bands of starving men began to parade through the streets of the great towns crying "Liberty and Work." Their cause was taken up by Jacques van Artevelde, a wealthy burgher of Ghent, a man of some military experience and one who possessed the useful qualities of energy and eloquence. To van Artevelde the first consideration was to procure the readmission of English wool for the idle Flemish looms. He used his position as captain of the militia and president of the guilds of Ghent, his control over the anti-French faction (the "Men of the Lion"), and the general distress to bring the Flemish towns into an alliance with the English king. For this support Edward paid "both high and low." He removed the embargo on wool, but to satisfy the consciences of the Flemings, threatened by papal excommunication if they became rebels, officially asserted his claim to the crown of France, added the *fleur-de-lys* to the royal standard and the motto "*Dieu et mon droit*" to the royal arms (1337).

Robert of Artois, a fugitive from French justice on charges of forgery, perjury, sorcery, and poisoning, had been welcomed at the

English court, where he exercised his ingenuity in convincing Edward of the soundness of the claim to France. This was somewhat in the nature of "a Roland for an Oliver," since at the court of Philip VI the little David Bruce, rival to Edward's puppet king of Scotland, was a favored guest. English and French seamen still carried on their traditional hostilities and each harassed the coasts of the other.

Robert of Artois

France was worse prepared to enter upon a war with England than she thought. Appearances in this case were deceitful. The country was prosperous after a century of comparative peace and had a population of nearly twenty million. From a military standpoint the advantage of interior lines was offset by the inherent weaknesses of the army itself. The government enjoyed no fixed revenue, computable in advance, for the payment of troops or the procuration of supplies. A *levée en masse* could bring out the male population capable of bearing arms, but the battle of Cassel gave a false confidence in the supremacy of cavalry and a contempt for foot soldiers. The French knights were very paragons of the chivalrous ideal, full of *élan* and of epic courage: the French king was chivalry itself. But chivalry scorned discipline, and discipline is the strength of armies. A hot charge and a fierce exchange of blows completed the repertoire of a force which knew nothing of strategy or the complications of maneuvering, and cared less.

The military position of France

England was in better case. England had its knights devoted to the ideal of the "Round Table," but England had its yeomanry armed with the longbow, which could be shot with thrice the rapidity of the crossbow, and with an effect harassing at four hundred yards and deadly accurate at a hundred. More important was the lesson the English had learned in the campaigns in wild Wales and Scotland, the necessity of using cavalry in conjunction with infantry "in position." At Falkirk and at Hallidon Hill men-at-arms, supported on the wings by archers, had proved invincible. The English knight was glad to stand shoulder to shoulder with the sturdy commoner. Financially, England was in much the same position as its enemy, but Parliament was more reliable than the States-General, and when it promised support redeemed its promises in gold. And, finally, England was compact, the king's writ ran throughout the land without the embarrassment of appanages.

and England

The war, once under way, proceeded without haste and without much objective. Edward III tarried awhile in Flanders, wandered

*The battle of
Sluys (1340)*

as far west as Cambrai, burned crops and pillaged, left his crown with the Archbishop of Trèves as security for his debts, and returned to England (1339). In 1340, however, the English mariners won a decisive naval battle off Sluys, one of the ever-changing ports of Bruges, which gave Edward command of the Channel and ready access to Flanders. Aside from this Edward made no progress. His ally, Lewis of Bavaria, was in no position to give him aid, and the Flemings, busy with their wool, were interested mainly in keeping off a French attack. The year ended with a truce.

*The Breton
dispute*

A disputed succession to the duchy of Brittany gave ample opportunity for a renewal of the quarrel. John III of Brittany died (1340) without an heir. Philip VI, with a happy disregard for the obvious parallelism to his own argument with Edward, supported the claims of Jeanne of Penthièvre, niece of the departed. Edward, not to be outdone in inconsistency, urged the claims of John of Montfort, brother of the late John III. So Philip and Edward in Brittany gave the lie to the claims they were urging in France. "*Mais c'est la guerre.*" Edward gained allies in Brittany.

It was well for Edward that Brittany was divided in its support of England and France. In 1345 an uprising of Flemish workmen had brought with it the assassination of Jacques van Artevelde and, as a consequence, made doubtful the feasibility of using Flanders as a base of operations in the future. Lancaster was operating in Guienne against the threatening advance of Philip's eldest son, John, but he needed reënforcement, and Edward decided to come to his assistance in person.

*The campaign
of 1346*

In 1346 he left England for Bordeaux but, either because of adverse winds or at the suggestion of a disaffected Frenchman, he changed his plans suddenly and landed on the Breton coast. This attack on the north took the French completely by surprise, and Edward was able to proceed unopposed along the coast, burning and pillaging in the approved manner of the day. At the Seine he turned southward and following the left bank proceeded leisurely and inexplicably toward Paris. Philip, to more purpose and with a vastly superior force, watched him from the other bank.

At Poissy Edward decided to clear out while he could. He forced a passage across the Seine and started north for Ponthieu at his best speed, the French following in hot pursuit. It was touch and go with the little English army; the bridges over the Somme had been destroyed, and it seemed as though escape were impossible.

But a ford was discovered or revealed at Blanche-Taque; the army crossed at low tide and gained enough of precious time to pick its own battlefield. Edward chose a section of rising ground, flanked on either side with woodland, between the villages of Crécy and Wadicourt. He arranged his troops in the normal English method. The men-at-arms were dismounted and arranged in three divisions or "battles." A reserve force was held in the rear. From the wings of each "battle" a body of archers was advanced on a diagonal so that the English front presented the appearance of a four-toothed saw and formed, in fact, three semicircles of death.

Late the following afternoon (August 26, 1346) the advance forces of the French drew up before the English. They were hot and weary; a thunderstorm had wetted the strings of the Genoese crossbows; the afternoon sun was now shining directly into their faces; men were still plodding the long road from Abbeville. Common sense advised delay, but chivalry was already out of patience with this wild wandering over the countryside. The word was given to the Genoese bowmen to begin the attack. These luckless fellows obeyed but came within the range of the "feathered death" long before they could get close enough to use their bolts with any effect. The appalling noise of the three English cannon added to their discomfiture, and they started to retreat. This was more than French knighthood could stand. Without waiting for the Genoese to get out of the way, the French cavalry dashed down into the Vallée des Clercs to sweep the English from the opposite hill. Into the Genoese they rode, and those who overrode this obstacle found swift death from the cross fire of arrows that came upon them like snow. Charge after charge met the same fate, and only once did the French cavalry *reach* the English lines, there to be easily repulsed. Edward, it is reported, did not find it necessary to don his helmet. When night put a merciful end to the slaughter, the French king was in full flight and his army was seeking shelter in nearby towns or had disintegrated in a general *sauve qui peut*.

The battle of Crécy has been listed among the decisive battles of the world, but it is doubtful whether this estimate is justifiable. It had no appreciable political effect; and while from a military standpoint it was important, it decided little beyond the safety of Edward's army and the fate of the town of Calais for the next two centuries. Its tactical significance was already appreciated by the English and completely ignored by the French.

*The battle of
Crécy*

*Exaggerated
importance*

After burying the dead, Edward pursued a leisurely and plundering course along the coast to Calais. This town, protected by walls and ramparts, swamps, sea, sand dunes, and a double ditch, and defended by a strong garrison, was safe from any English assault but was not prepared to withstand a lengthy siege. Edward was determined to obtain possession of Calais, which would give England an outlet for her wool unhampered by the vagaries of continental politics. The English army reconciled itself to a long siege, dug trenches, threw up embankments, and constructed a veritable town, called Villeneuve-le-Hardi (Newton-the-Bold), with a Wednesday and Saturday market.

For many weary months the inhabitants of Calais endured the monotony of the siege, receiving additional supplies of food only when some hardy mariner was able to elude or break through the English blockade. This occasional relief ceased with the strengthening of the English fleet and the erection of a great wooden tower to command the harbor mouth. After eleven months the situation in Calais became critical, and when the inhabitants had exhausted the last of the food including the dogs and horses, cats and mice, and no alternative was left but cannibalism or starvation, they surrendered (August 4, 1347). The inhabitants were spared their lives, but they were expelled from the town, which was repopulated with imported Englishmen.

Philip had not abandoned Calais without doing what he could to relieve it. He subsidized private shipowners to run the blockade, and he labored to create a relieving force. But he was at all times hampered by lack of funds, and when in July he eventually succeeded in gathering a respectable force at Arras and moved northward to the relief of Calais, he found the English too strongly intrenched to try the hazard of an attack. He retired, leaving the city to its fate, and the decision was a wise one, for he still retained the means of defending the rest of his kingdom. After the capture of Calais the war fell into a state of suspended animation. Papal legates profited by the mutual exhaustion to bring about a truce between the rival kings (September, 1347) and no actual hostilities troubled the rest of Philip's reign. But a worse disaster than war swept over France and England alike.

Out of the East, probably carried in the ships of Italian merchants, came something frightful resembling the bubonic plague. From southern France it moved steadily northward, crossed the

*The siege of
Calais
(1346-1347)*

*The
helplessness of
Philip VI*

*The Black
Death*

Narrow Seas, and found its way into the fastnesses of Scotland. Wherever it passed—and few were the villages of Europe that escaped—it carried away an appalling number of the population with a swiftness that had an element of mercy. Medieval medicine was powerless to relieve the afflicted or to protect the sound, and men sought to keep the Angel of Death from their houses by chalking a “Lord, have Mercy upon us” on their doors. There was little time for thoughts of war in those black days.

Philip VI died August 22, 1350, leaving the kingdom even larger than at his accession. The loss of Calais had been counterbalanced by the purchase of Montpellier and Dauphiné from bankrupt spendthrifts. The reign was of more interest than the mediocre ability of the king would indicate. The institutional development manifest under the later Capets was continued, and Parlement attained the form which was to remain substantially unchanged until the Revolution. The States-General was active and seemed on the point of obtaining a measure of control over the royal finances, for it sometimes petitioned for a redress of grievances before voting supplies. The provincial *parlements* gained the privilege of supervising the collection of provincial levies and obtained from the king the assurance that votes of supply would not be taken as a precedent. Royal justice was extended at the expense of the Church, by restricting the number and the types of cases to be tried in episcopal courts.

On the other hand, the defects of the Capetian system were likewise continued. The system of appanages became as much a part of Valois policy as it had been of Capetian. Philip gave Normandy and Anjou to his eldest son, John, and to the younger, Philip, Valois and Orléans. Philip VI, as Philip IV, was a dabbler in coins, and he needed to be, for the multitude of domestic servants which Valois luxuriousness required swallowed over half the royal revenue. Unlike his great predecessor, he was not surrounded by any outstanding counselors. Indeed, it is hard to find any great man in the France of Philip “the Pious.”

The extravagant and rather useless chivalry for which the French nobility in general, and the Valois in particular, were noted found a very paragon in John “the Good,” eldest son of Philip VI, who succeeded his father in 1350 and misgoverned France for fourteen years. He out-Philipped Philip in quixotic conduct and revealed a political incapacity which amounted to genius. He knew nothing

France in 1350

Appanages

*John II
(1350-1364)*

of the art of government and cared less; he was brave in battle, but his strategy never went beyond the wild mad charge that brought victory or ruin: it mattered little which. He had the merit of making quick decisions — though they were generally the worst possible — and the defect of holding to them with a fatal obstinacy. His indifference to the routine of administration was the more serious for France, since his easy-going nature and weakness for flattery permitted the government to get into the hands of greedy, ambitious, and quite incapable counselors.

The reign was, for all that, a most exciting one for France. These fourteen years saw the French chivalry overwhelmed in another Crécy and the States-General *almost* become an essential part of the national government. Paris enjoyed some feverish months of civic independence, treason, and civil war, and the countryside lay in abject terror of marauding bands of desperate peasants and soldiers out of legitimate employment.

Danger from Charles "the Bad"

John's first embarrassment came from within the family, when Charles "the Bad" of Navarre attempted to reach the throne of France, using his mother Jeanne as his "bridge and plank." Charles could cause no end of trouble, for a portion of his territory included Evreux, dangerously near Paris, and his claim to the throne, weak as it was, gave him opportunity enough to intrigue with an enemy without the realm or any malcontent within. Charles even negotiated with Edward III on the basis of a mutual division of France.

The war once more

War with England, suspended since the fall of Calais, broke out again in 1355. By the severity of his administration in Guienne and the ravages committed on a pillaging expedition through Languedoc, the Prince of Wales, better known as the Black Prince, had caused the court of King John to resound to the complaints of the offended and the appeals of the distressed. John summoned the States-General, which readily voted funds for the purchase of an army. But this advantage was considerably neutralized by an act of singular imprudence. While Charles the Bad and some of his cronies were enjoying a banquet in Rouen, John interrupted the proceedings by arresting Charles and summarily executing his henchmen. The net result was that at the moment when John was on the point of marching against the Black Prince in the south, he threw all the supporters of Navarre into the camp of the English and opened the way for an invasion through Normandy.

Meanwhile, the Black Prince had taken the offensive. He had

pillaged his way northward with no very definite objective, although he may have hoped to meet an English army which might be moving down from Normandy in his general direction. He reached the Loire at Amboise, but there was no way to get across in the face of the vastly superior force which John had marshaled against him. As in the Crécy campaign, once more an English army had wandered about until it was necessary to run for home. ("Home" for the Black Prince was Bordeaux.)

The Black Prince

By forced marches the English struck back to the southwest, and by forced marches the French followed them until the Black Prince was brought to bay near Poitiers. He could advance no further and there was nowhere to retreat. On a field at Malpertuis he arranged his little force as he had seen his father set his lines at Crécy. John had his enemy at his mercy; he had only to surround the English army and wait patiently for a surrender that could not be long delayed.

At bay

But that was not the way of chivalry and that was not the way of John. Honor demanded that when the enemy was met the enemy must be attacked, and John was the soul of honor. Such a decision was unnecessary, but it need not have been fatal. If the Black Prince had not avoided his father's habit of aimless wandering, he had not failed to observe his clever use of terrain. The field of Malpertuis offered considerable advantages to a defending force. Swampy land flanked the approach to the rising ground where the English rested, and swampy flanks, while uncomfortable for archers, are impassable for heavy cavalry. Across the base of the hill ran a hedge broken in the center to give passage to a farmer and his cart. In the marshland the Black Prince posted a force of archers to meet an attacking force with a deadly cross fire, and behind the hedge English yeomen armed with the deadly longbow stood shoulder to shoulder with mailed men-at-arms dismounted for defense.

Preparations for battle

Under such circumstances John should have remembered Crécy and fought, if fight he must, on foot. Indeed, he was advised to dismount his men-at-arms and crush the enemy by steadiness, not suddenness, of attack. But a dismounted knight was but a sorry thing in the eyes of the good King John, the word was given to charge the foe in the manner approved by chivalry, and Malpertuis (or Poitiers) became another Crécy. Time and again the French knights with stunning courage swept across the field but to collapse before the winged death that lurked behind the hedge. The English

*Poitiers
(Malpertuis)
(1356)*

were nearer defeat at Poitiers than at Crécy; their ammunition ran low and arrows were retrieved from the bodies of the dead or dying; but when a flanking movement by the Captal de Buch came upon the French rear, the battle was over. John, who had no thought of flight and was probably having the time of his life, was captured and led away to take refreshment in the tent of the Black Prince (September 19, 1356).

The battle of Poitiers left France without a king and the government in the hands of John's eldest son, Charles, as regent. For twenty-four years, as regent and king, Charles guided the destinies of the kingdom and did it fairly well. The regency, however, encountered difficulties at the very start. The States-General which had raised the money for the army was loud in its complaint of the conduct of the war and assailed the nobility in terms which took no pains to conceal its indignation. At the meeting held in November, 1355, the States-General had attempted to exercise some control over national expenditures by determining the sources of revenue and by appointing a representative committee from each Estate to supervise its use. In 1356 it capitalized the defeat of Poitiers and the absence of the king to make a bid for effective control.

French indignation

The States-General of 1356

Under the leadership of Robert le Coq, Bishop of Laon, and Stephen Marcel, a wealthy cloth merchant and Provost of the Merchants of Paris, the States-General assumed a bold front and attempted to gain control of State matters other than finance. A committee of inquiry was appointed, which drew up a scathing indictment against the "evil counselors of the king," urging their dismissal and the establishment in their place of two committees from the States-General to form a Department of War and a Department of General Administration. Charles asked for time to consider the proposed changes, while Marcel bestirred himself to get the support of Paris for the States-General. When the States-General met again in March, 1357, it voted supplies of money only after the regent had accepted its program of reform, which was passed under the title of the Great Ordinance.

The Great Ordinance 1357

This document marks the nearest approach to constitutional government in France before the wild days of Louis XVI. The Great Ordinance gave the States-General the power of removing the king's ministers and restricted the king to the appointment of such men as had the confidence of the general assembly. It was asserted that the States-General had an existence independent of a royal summons

and could meet on its own initiative if the state of the realm required it. Further, the Ordinance gave the States-General the exclusive right to levy imposts, which were to be collected by its agents and spent under its supervision. The administration of the new reform was intrusted to a council of thirty-six chosen equally from the three Estates.

Had it been in the heart of the regent or in the power of the "States" to enforce the Ordinance, France might have had a smoother road to political liberty. But Charles was a Valois with a Valois' sense of royal dignity, and the times fought against the reformers. In the first place the Ordinance of 1357 was the work of Frenchmen north of the Loire, for France was yet so far from national unity that Languedoc assembled in its own States-General. Even within the States-General of the north there was no real unity, for while the three Estates were represented the Ordinance was the work of the Third Estate and met with no coöperation from the nobles or the clergy. In the second place, the exigencies of foreign and civil war had brought it about that the most vigorous champions of the Ordinance were not unsuspected of treason to the crown. Stephen Marcel was compelled to win Paris over to the side of reform, no matter how or by what aid, and his search for allies had brought him into contact with the Navarrese, constant only in their hostility to the House of Valois. And finally, the Ordinance failed because to the taxpayer it merely represented a change of tax collectors and the eternal unpopularity of the revenue officer became the meed of the financial agents of the States-General.

In a word, the fate of the Ordinance lay with Stephen Marcel and Paris, and in the capital things were approaching a crisis. Marcel, in his capacity as provost, an office combining the power of a chief of police with the influence of a president of the Chamber of Commerce, had established a virtual dictatorship in the city, but his position as champion of the Ordinance, by the very nature of things, forced him and Paris into opposition to the regent and the Valois administration. Time and fortune worked against him.

Charles took advantage of the apathy of the nobles and clergy to the Ordinance and of the isolation of Paris to summon the States-General to Compiègne in 1358. He weakened the cause of reform by publicly proclaiming Marcel a rebel and disarmed opposition by generous assurances of honest administration.

While Charles was recovering some of the ground gained by

Failure

*Stephen
Marcel*

The Jacquerie

the reformers and Marcel was being cut off from aid, the public mind was diverted by the uprising known as the *Jacquerie*. The peasantry had been the helpless victims of the twenty years of pillage which went by the name of war. Even when the soldiers did not burn up or trample down the crops or drive away the cattle, still the ransom of the lords captured at Crécy or Poitiers was paid, in the last analysis, with the produce or labor of thousands of bewildered Kaspars who did not know "what did they kill each other for." Added to the distress of war had come the stark terror of the Black Death.

In Champagne the peasants rose in a vague revolt against local oppression and the general chaos. The movement, if it were a movement and not merely the "desperate effort of excessive suffering," spread rapidly throughout the North and summer skies were strangely red where plundered houses burned. The savagery which accompanied the uprising has been unduly emphasized; there was plunder and pillaging aplenty, but of those who were done to death the known record does not reach two score.

The nobles rallied at once to protect their estates and punish the upstart knaves who dared to attack the existing social order. With only casual leadership, untrained for war, and armed with weapons more suited for the farm than for the camp, the peasants were no match for chivalry now in deadly earnest. Everywhere they were hunted down and slaughtered without quarter.

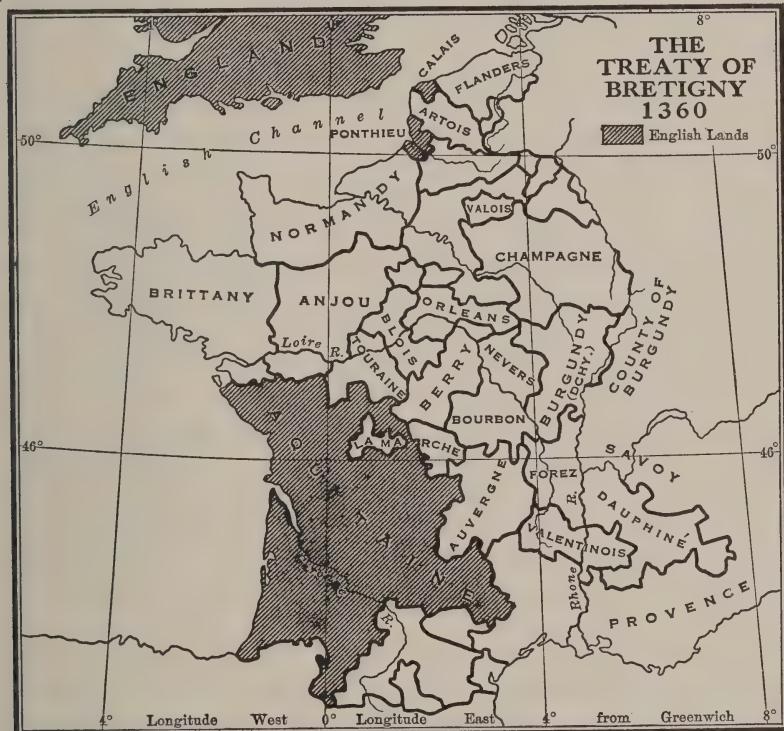
The fall of Stephen Marcel

The uprising of the *Jacquerie* gave one advantage to Charles, the regent. Stephen Marcel, if not in actual sympathy with the movement, had protested against the merciless repression which had accompanied its collapse. The militant nobility fresh from its triumph over the peasants was available now for use against the scarcely less dangerous Marcel. So Charles moved against Paris and camped beyond the walls. The ever fickle Paris mob was aroused at the report that Marcel was plotting to hand the city over to Charles the Bad and to aid him in his claim to the French throne. He was murdered (July 31, 1358) and the gates of the city were opened to the regent.

Charles was once more in control of things, but his position was none too secure. He lacked money, but he had little inclination to ask a States-General for supplies even to renew the war, now almost forgotten in the press of other matters. The situation was favorable to inquire about a peace, and agents hurried back and forth between Paris and London.

In the two years that had passed since Poitiers, the good King John had done nothing but languish in durance hardly vile. His imprisonment in England had been strictly formal; he was for the most part free to move about, his guards keeping inoffensively in the background; the Savoy was given him for a residence, he walked and talked with the English king, grew enthusiastic over cockfighting, and went hawking in the fields or along the riverside. He had his harpists and minstrels, he broke the monotony of idle hours

*King John in
captivity*



admiring the intricacies of a portable clock, and made a bit of pocket money selling his private stock of French wines "at a price."

He was perhaps only mildly interested in the negotiations for peace, for his acceptance of Edward's terms would indicate that he hadn't bothered to read them or was convinced that they would lead to nothing. This Treaty of London (March 24, 1359) permitted France to purchase peace and her king in return for a ransom amounting to about \$9,000,000 and the surrender of the western half of France to England. The terms were ridiculous and France

*The Treaty of
Calais
(Bretigny)
(1360)*

wisely rejected them. Further negotiations resulted in a treaty drawn up at Bretigny (May 8, 1360) and signed at Calais five months later. By the terms of the Treaty of Calais, John's ransom was reduced to about \$6,500,000, but in return Edward abandoned his claim to the throne of France and renounced his pretensions to Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine.

Hostilities were over, and John was once more king in Paris, but neither his troubles nor those of France were over. Bands of soldiers thrown out of official employment mobilized under swashbuckling captains and moved about the countryside plundering wherever they went. Drawn from every part of Europe, they had no preference as to whom they fought, for whom, or where. Their leaders were not without genius and tales of rich plunder and a wild, care-free life incited many a young Frenchman to exchange the profitless monotony of the farm for the roistering excitements of a knight of the road. These bands of brigands, as they were called from the *brigantin* or defensive armor they wore, were highly organized, with a staff of clerks and lawyers recruited from their captives, servants for every task, and a considerable female following which tried to forget its lost respectability in a whirl of luxury that aped the fashions and etiquette of the court. Sir John Hawkwood, Sir Walter Manning, Rodrigo de Villandrando, and half a dozen others made names for themselves as leaders of successful Companies, whose members rejoiced when they "rode forth into the country and fell in with a rich abbot, or with a caravan of mules belonging to Montpellier or Toulouse, laden with cloth from Brussels or furs from the fair at Lendit, with spices from Bruges or silks from Damascus or Alexandria."¹

The money to pay the king's ransom came in but slowly, and John succeeded in spending on himself a good bit of what was received. Early in 1364 his son, Philip, who had remained in the hands of the English as security for the ransom, broke his parole to end his separation from his young bride. John felt that his honor had been stained; so, packing his portable clock, he returned to pleasant captivity in London. And there, April 8, 1364, he died.

It is useless to attempt to say much in favor of John the Good. He was equally incompetent as a general and as a king. He sought money everywhere and threw it away like a drunken sailor, and to about as much use. The counselors to whom he intrusted the govern-

The brigands

*Estimate of
King John*

¹ *The Atlantic Monthly*, LXVI, 632.

ment, Simon de Bucy, Robert de Lorris, and Nicholas Braque, were a fine gang of ruffians and well deserved the censure of the States-General. When the important duchy of Burgundy fell to the crown by escheat in 1361, he at once gave it to his son, Philip the Bold, as an appanage, an act which nearly spelt disaster for his successors. His chivalry was his only strong point as an individual and his greatest weakness as a king. In chivalry he lived, moved, and had all his being. When his "sweet cousin," Edward of England, instituted the Order of the Garter, John countered with the Order of the Star, but he must have been somewhat disappointed, for at the first great banquet which he gave to the Order, if his "stars" didn't fight in their courses they did make away with most of the table ornaments and did not spare the wall and window hangings.

The son who succeeded him in 1364 and held the throne until 1380 was, fortunately, cast in a different mold. Charles V had no liking for the clash of steel. He suffered from ill health and had not hesitated when his father suggested that he leave the field at Poitiers while there was yet time. Charles was a melancholy man of serious disposition, given to contemplation, and not without ability as a scholar.

The new king, profiting by his experience with the reformers of the States-General during his regency, had given a deal of thought to the prerogatives and duties of royalty. He took a large view of the kingship, and his political theory was supported by the able Nicholas Oresme who had made a compilation of the views of medieval writers on the State. Charles realized clearly that the kingdom needed an immediate restoration of strong, honest government and that innovations could, indeed must, wait. Money was badly needed, and this involved increased taxation, but the taxpayer regained confidence when it became clear that the money was not being squandered but was being used to put the realm in a state of defense. A serious effort was made to build up an efficient army, to reconstruct the fleet that had been shattered at Sluys, and to strengthen such castles as occupied strategic positions. He was wise enough to seek advice and intelligent enough to pick the best men available as his assistants. In addition to Nicholas Oresme, he profited from the advice and services of Bureau de la Rivière, an able lawyer whose interest in gardening added Romaine lettuce to the menu of the epicure; of John de Vienne, hero of the siege of

Charles V
(1364-1380)

His plans

Calais, but now made admiral of the fleet; and, above all, of Bertrand du Guesclin, the toughest warrior in Europe.

Charles at once proceeded to free the throne of France from the menace of Charles the Bad. A series of vigorous military operations directed by Du Guesclin brought the King of Navarre to terms (1365) by which he gave up his holdings in Nantes, Longueville, and Meulan for the more distant and therefore less dangerous county of Montpellier. The Navarrese question settled, Charles hampered English politics by reconciling the Breton factions in the Treaty of Guérande. And then he and Du Guesclin turned against the Companies, which were as great an obstacle to good government as a terror to the countryside. Some were crushed or dispersed, while others were led by the prospect of immediate pay and future plunder to go off to Spain and aid Henry Trastamere recover the crown of Aragon.

In 1369 Charles V saw fit to reopen the war with England and used what might be called the "French gambit"; that is, he summoned the Duke of Guienne to the royal court to answer the complaints of his vassals. But Charles had not entered the war with his eyes shut, nor was he carried away by any of his father's or grandfather's chivalry which saw in war no more than a glorified and extended tournament. He had blocked Edward in Brittany by the Treaty of Guérande, and he prevented England from using Flanders by returning the towns seized after Cassel, by generous and judicious bribery and by permitting the Count of Flanders to marry his daughter and heiress, Margaret, to Philip of Burgundy. Above all, he and Du Guesclin had agreed upon a military program.

Philip and John had been content to reduce military strategy to its simplest terms by gathering a feudal army and hurling it at the enemy. Charles and Du Guesclin had another plan. Both admitted the superiority of the English army in the field, at least until some rival to the longbow could be developed. It was therefore determined that the French armies should avoid anything approaching a major engagement in the field, but should be content with the piecemeal reoccupation of lost territory, the rigorous defense of towns and fortified places, and the persistent harassing of straggling bands of enemy troops. For the rest, the English were left free to ravage the open country if they liked, a process which would be of no military value and would have the assured effect of destroying every vestige of pro-English sympathy wherever the marauders marauded.

The plan worked with amazing success. Knolles, Lancaster, and the Black Prince wandered wildly about, but met no enemy, fought no real battles, gained no town or district of any importance, and captured nothing but corn and cattle and the hatred of the population. On the other hand, the work of reoccupation over a wide front and radiating from a score of centers was succeeding so rapidly that when Edward III died, in 1377, French mariners were feared from Kent to Devon, and only the five towns of Cherbourg, Calais, Brest, Bayonne, and Bordeaux remained of the Angevin inheritance and the glorious days of Crécy and Poitiers.

It succeeds

At this moment of success Charles made his first and only blunder. He declared Brittany incorporated into the kingdom of France, an act of folly which drove the proud Bretons to an angry repudiation and delayed the union of Brittany and France for more than a century. In 1380 brave and loyal Du Guesclin was killed in an attempt to rid France of the Companies as he had freed her from the English. A month or so later Charles V followed him to the grave (September 16, 1380).

The Breton blunder

To Charles V must go the credit of leading France out of a condition almost hopeless in its anarchy and social chaos and of giving it a new hold on life. Patience, intelligence, tact, and no mean ability were required, and these Charles possessed. Yet he found time to read and to collect one of the largest libraries in Europe. He was well versed in both civil and canon law, and in all his dealings showed a finesse and a legal subtlety against which the duller minds of his English enemies had no defense. He had the Valois love of richness, remodeled and beautified his favorite residences, the Louvre and St Pol, and had a splendid collection of cameos and gems. He was interested in astronomy and read with interest or conviction the works of astrologers. Moderate, pious, dignified, and cultured, he is pleasing in the contemporary verse of Christine of Pisa and attractive to all followers of French history.

His son is not so, and the reign of Charles VI is in many respects a reversion to the dark times of Crécy and Poitiers. Forty years of governmental inefficiency, treason, civil war, and civic uprisings ended in a renewal of the war with England, the tragic day at Agincourt, and the official recognition of a future king of England as a future king of France. Charles VI, "the Simple," had little of his father's intelligence and none of his ability to surround himself with able counselors and agents. Twelve years after his accession he

*Charles VI
(1380-1422)*

became quite mad, so violently so at times that it was necessary to confine him in a padded cell. From 1392 until his death thirty years later his lucid intervals were rare and brief, and the government for the most part fell into the hands of selfish relatives and favorites.

Indeed, Charles VI enjoyed little personal government at all. He was but twelve years of age when his father died and the realm was given over to a Council of Regency, consisting mainly of his three uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Burgundy, and their brother-in-law, the Duke of Bourbon. The selection of these men was natural but unwise, for each used his new position to further his own interests rather than the good of France; the Duke of Anjou had his heart set upon building up a strong Neapolitan kingdom, Burgundy was mainly concerned with Flanders, while Berry cared for nothing beyond a luxurious existence and the means of maintaining it. Charles would receive little valuable instruction in the arts of government from such a circle of advisers.

Disturbance Troubles beset the government from the very start. Heavy taxation and the increasing demands of the council irritated the States-General, while economic distress or dissatisfaction manifested itself in outbreaks of violence. Ghent flared up in open revolt under the leadership of Philip van Artevelde, who abandoned his hobby of fishing to follow his father's example. Similar disturbances appeared at Rouen, Rheims, Lyons, and Orléans. Throughout the South bands of unemployed calling themselves the *Tuchins* took up a life of brigandage, while angry workmen under the name of *Maillotins* (mace wielders) terrorized the good people of Paris. But undisciplined distress has little power of resistance. Vested interests and outraged citizens rallied to the defense of society; the Flemish rebels were overwhelmed at Roosebeke (1382) and the victorious army reduced the "good towns" to submission.

France was still officially at war with England, but the energy to carry on the conflict and complete the expulsion of the enemy had died with Charles V. It is true that the Duke of Burgundy had visions of invading England but little came of it, and hostilities were suspended altogether before the century had run out. France even played with the dangerous idea of allowing the King of England (Richard II) to marry a princess of France.

The Marmosets and Louis of Orléans In 1388 Charles VI astounded his uncles by deciding to rule France for a while himself with the aid of the old type of Counselors, whom the disgruntled dukes ungraciously nicknamed the *Marmosets* (gar-

goyles). The gargoyles never acquired that influence which they exercised at the court of John, not because Charles VI was able, but because he had fallen under the peculiar fascination of his brother, Louis of Orléans, known to contemporaries and posterity as the "brilliant vice." For four years Louis lorded it over king, gargoyles, and France, and only gave way when Charles VI was smitten with madness in 1392, and the dukes resumed their interrupted rule.

From 1392 until the day of the king's death (October 21, 1422) France was torn apart by sordid and selfish quarrelings within the royal family. Louis of Orléans and Philip of Burgundy struggled for the mastery of the realm, with Philip gradually getting the upper hand, for he arranged a double marriage between his son and daughter and the mad king's daughter and son. His death in 1404 did not end the quarrel, for his son, John "the Fearless," inherited his father's policy with his estates, and so much energy did he show that Louis of Orléans was assassinated November 23, 1407. Far from denying his share in this cowardly business, John virtually boasted of it, for he had John Petit deliver a long and pedantic discourse in justification of the crime before a fashionable audience in the cathedral of Notre Dame. The star of Burgundy was in the ascendant.

But the indignant followers of the House of Orléans were not convinced by Petit's sophistry and had no intention of abandoning the quarrel. By 1410 they had found a leader in Bernard of Armagnac, uncle of the murdered Louis and father-in-law of Charles VI. Under the banner of Armagnac the Orléanist faction renewed the struggle with Burgundy, the control of the monarchy being the goal of both, the welfare of France the solicitude of neither.

France itself had not witnessed this family row without protest. In 1413 the States-General had revived the reform program of the Great Ordinance, while a violent uprising in Paris engineered by the *Cabochians* (their leader was Caboche, the butcher), in favor of political, economic, and social reform, gave superficial appearance of a return to the days of Stephen Marcel and the *Jacquerie*. The States-General recommended the substitution of elected for appointed officials of State, and suggested the creation of a council, responsible to the nation, which, while not to govern itself, should be consulted by the government upon all matters of general importance. As Stephen Marcel had been weakened by his alleged association with the *Jacquerie*, so now the States-General suffered from

Burgundy
versus Orléans

The
Cabochians

a reputed connection with Caboche. Its reform bill was hailed as the *Cabochian Ordinance* and discredited.

Two years later France was given something else, though scarcely more serious, to think about. In 1413 Henry IV of England died and was succeeded by his ambitious and active son, Henry V. The Lancastrian dynasty, which had come into power upon the deposition of Richard II (1399), was none too sure of its position, and Henry V perhaps thought to create a diversion from domestic problems by renewing the French war. Victory would be a great asset to the new house, and victory was not improbable, for Henry IV had already sounded out the leaders of the Burgundian and the Armagnac factions, and his son knew that there was little likelihood of finding both parties opposed to him in the event of an invasion. Indeed, Henry V felt sure of Burgundian neutrality, if not actual support, for Philip the Bold had helped his father reach the English throne.

Henry asked for the hand of Catherine, daughter of Charles VI, with Normandy, Anjou, and Maine as a dowry. Charles agreed so far as Catherine was concerned but offered Guienne in place of the northern duchies. 'Twas not enough; Henry revived the claims of Edward III, abandoned by the Treaty of Calais, and the war was on.

In the late summer of 1415 the English army landed in Normandy and without waiting for reënforcements struck out for distant Calais, that Henry might make good his boast that he "would ride through France." The whole campaign was remarkably like that of 1346 and, with that as an example, far less excusable. Henry and his army crossed the Somme at Nesle (for Blanche-Taque was guarded now) to find the French army thrown across his path at Agincourt. He was caught.

The French had not chosen their ground particularly well; the field was too narrow to permit the full and free use of their superior numbers, and the ground was soft from recent rains. But so long as they did not attack, they were as certain of victory as humans have any right to be. On the other hand, Henry had no recourse but to force an attack. He took the preliminary precaution of driving stakes into the ground before his battle line for the confusion of a charging cavalry, and he sent out a body of archers to worry the enemy. The French men-at-arms were dismounted (a tribute to Crécy and Poitiers), but to stand, idle and helpless targets for English longbows, or to retreat out of range was more than their

*Henry V of
England enters
the war*

*Agincourt
(1415)*

pride or the terrain would easily permit. Caution succumbed to annoyance, and the fatal order to attack was given. Over six thousand French dead as compared with one hundred and twenty Englishmen slain marks the exorbitant price of folly (October 25, 1415). Henry V moved on to Calais.

John the Fearless of Burgundy had not been present at the battle of Agincourt, but within a twelvemonth he definitely abandoned the cause of France and gave his support to the King of England. This assistance was of great value to Henry V, for he could devote all of his efforts to the reduction of Normandy while John undertook the capture of Paris, whose citizens misinterpreted the Burgundian policy as one of reform and regarded its opposition to the Armagnacs as a protest against governmental abuses. In May, 1418, Paris was betrayed by a pro-Burgundian faction within the walls, and John entered the capital to seize the king and massacre what Armagnacs came within reach. The mad king's eldest son, Charles, known as the Dauphin, escaped to Bourges, which henceforth served as the headquarters of the Orléanist party and the rallying point for the enemies of England.

Burgundy joins England

It was obvious to everyone that the condition of English success and continuance in France was the maintenance of the Burgundian alliance. The Dauphin and his party entered into negotiations with John the Fearless with a view to healing this disastrous quarrel and of safeguarding the future of the French crown, for the prospect of a personal union of France and England under an English king was only a shade less distasteful to Burgundy than to Orléans. A meeting between John and the Dauphin was arranged at Montereau (September 10, 1419), but a hasty word, an imprudent gesture, led to a confused exchange of blows which left John dead upon the place.

The affair at Montereau

The affair at Montereau had distressing consequences. The breach between Burgundians and Armagnacs widened further than ever, and John's heir, Philip the Good, tightened the alliance of his house with England. The mad king, carefully guarded and controlled by Burgundy, was induced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Troyes (May 21, 1420) with Henry V. This treaty, which has been represented as an attempt to end the long struggle between the nations, to "plant neighbourhood and Christian-like accord in their sweet bosoms," marks the depth of French humiliation. By it Henry V received the hand of Catherine, daughter of Charles VI,

The Treaty of Troyes (1420)

and was recognized as the heir and successor to the French throne. During the lifetime of the present king, Henry was to act as general head of the administration. Neither Charles nor Henry long survived the Treaty of Troyes. On August 31, 1422, Henry V passed away at the age of thirty-five, and two months later to a day Charles VI died. The new King of France was an infant not yet a year old, Henry VI, son of Catherine and of the victor of Agincourt. Upon his deathbed Henry V appointed his brother, the Duke of Bedford, as regent with instructions to maintain the Burgundian alliance at all costs.

This situation in 1422 was far less desperate for the Dauphin and his little court at Bourges than the official state of things would indicate. Northern France to be sure was in the control of the Duke of Bedford and his Burgundian ally, but the rule of a foreigner was unpopular, and the Burgundian alliance had no surer cement than the whims of the Duke of Burgundy. Paris was the English capital, but only because Paris favored Burgundy. On the other hand, the "King of Bourges" could depend upon the support of the entire South, the neutrality of many north of the Loire, and the earnest desire in the hearts of nearly everyone to see the English "God-dammees" expelled.

Charles VII, son of an insane father and of a mother who, if not a wanton, was widely suspected of wantonness, had had a distressing and neglected childhood. He possessed a good deal of common sense but was weak in character, restless, suspicious, and so utterly devoid of initiative that he became the tool of every transient favorite. The two people at his court who knew what most needed to be done, the Count of Richemont and Iolande of Aragon, were kept in the background for a decade, while the selfish policy of La Trémoille paralyzed aggressive action.

The Duke of Bedford, as able a man as the century produced, was meeting with plenty of difficulty and little assistance. The Normans resented the severity with which he re-established order and opposed the measures he took to restore economic prosperity. The Burgundian alliance continued, but Philip the Good, now that Burgundian interests had been well served, was visibly less enthusiastic about maintaining a connection which might become an embarrassment. Personal differences had already led to a coolness in relationships, and when Bedford's brother, the scholarly Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, imprudently married Jacqueline of

Charles VII

*Weakness of
the Anglo-
Burgundian
alliance*

Hainault, whom Philip, as her overlord, had designed for his cousin, the Duke of Brabant, the alliance received a permanent injury.

The crowning of the Dauphin as Charles VII, in opposition to the little Henry VI, had rendered it necessary to continue military operations to reduce the "King of Bourges." The English and Burgundian forces had proceeded somewhat sluggishly but had finally concentrated on the siege of Orléans, which, if captured, would afford a passage across the Loire and place southern France at the mercy of the invaders. Orléans was not prepared to make a heroic defense, and the townsmen offered to open its gates to Philip of Burgundy, but Bedford protested that he "would not beat the bush that others might catch the birds." Philip, in a pique, withdrew his forces from the siege, and the Burgundian alliance ceased to be an asset. Two months later Joan of Arc raised the siege of Orléans and gave France just that confidence in herself which was all that was necessary to drive the English from a position essentially untenable, and from a cause morally unsound.

The mystery of Joan of Arc may well be left to the psychologists, pathologists, or theologians. From the day when she first heard the voices of Ste Catherine and Ste Margaret, or saw St Michael in a vision, until she called upon them in her last dread moment in Rouen, her career defies that simple explanation demanded by a world that has forgotten how to wonder. After some preliminary — and natural — skepticism and doubt as to the source of her inspirations, Charles VII intrusted her with a commission and an army to relieve Orléans. Many who had only been awaiting the appearance of a leader attached themselves to her banner. On April 29, 1429, Joan and her relieving force entered Orléans. Nine days later the English, weakened by the withdrawal of the Burgundians and dispirited by the check to their operations and the loss of important outposts, raised the siege. The south of France was saved.

The relief of Orléans was only incidental to Joan's greater objective, the coronation of the "King of Bourges" as King of France at Rheims, the traditional crowning place for all the kings of France. This plan was not without danger, for the enemy blocked the roads and held all the important towns, and cautious minds might be pardoned if they hesitated before risking everything on a venture. But Joan was possessed of "a perfectly fearless spirit, which calculated no chances, felt no doubts, knew what it desired, and firmly believing

Orléans threatened

Joan of Arc

The relief of Orléans

in a divine mission, moved on serenely towards its aim.”² The French under Richemont captured Jargeau, routed “stout Talbot” at Patay, and cleared the way to Rheims. There, on July 17, Joan held the royal standard while Charles received the royal crown in the great cathedral, and Joan’s father prayed his thanks in the obscurity of a dark aisle.

There remained the English, but the English might be ignored for the present, because the substance of the Burgundian alliance was fading away like the face of the Cheshire cat, leaving only a mockery behind. Indeed, Bedford had been reduced to the desperate expedient of bribery and had given Champagne and Meaux to Philip as the price of further support. But Joan was impatient, for Paris was occupied by Burgundian soldiery, since Bedford had retired to Rouen to protect Normandy from threatened attack. Her plan failed, in part because of the obstructive tactics of jealous courtiers, made easy by the chronic lassitude of the king, and in part because of the vigorous resistance of the Burgundians. From Paris Joan turned to relieve the city of Compiègne closely beset by Burgundian troops. In a sortie she was captured and handed over to the English. Six months later she was burned as a heretic and sorceress in the market-square at Rouen (May 30, 1431).

It is useless to criticize and condemn the bigotry and wretched sophistry of the judges who engineered the trial, the vindictiveness of the English who permitted it, or the failure of Charles VII to interfere in her behalf. The judges were Normans and the University of Paris gave its pedantic assent. The men of the fifteenth century believed firmly in witchcraft and the operation of the powers of evil through human agents, and Joan’s trial was at least as fair as any which sent hundreds of women to the stake for crimes they could not commit. It is better to marvel at Joan’s splendid courage throughout the months of confinement, with no human associates save the rough English soldiers who kept constant guard in her cell. It is more pleasant to admire the mother-wit which never deserted her and which baffled the meanderings of dull juristic minds, and to picture her, friendless, unalarmed, as

“at times

Her dark eye rested, with a sadness sweet,
On brows, some mitred, yet unvenerable,

² Kitchin, G. W., *The History of France*, I, p. 527.

*The capture
and death of
Joan*

And wrinkled scribes with hot and hurrying hand
Transmuting truth to lies."

It is fine that the Church, which rehabilitated her in 1456, has made its most honorable amend by canonizing her in our own day, and that on the five hundredth anniversary of her martyrdom France joined Rouen in paying fitting tribute to her name.

Two years after the death of Joan, La Trémoille, the evil genius of Charles VII, fell from grace, and better minds and less selfish hearts influenced the policy of the court. The Constable de Richemont and the king's mother-in-law, Iolande of Aragon, began at once to bring about a dissolution of the Bedford-Burgundian alliance, a union never strong and now weakened by the death of the Duchess of Bedford, sister of Philip of Burgundy. Philip was ready to sell his support to the highest bidder, and two years of haggling were consumed before the "matter of France" triumphed over the commercial instincts of Burgundy. At Arras, in August of 1435, a strange sort of peace congress was opened, with representatives of England, Burgundy, and France among the participants. England offered terms which its military position rendered absurd, and upon their rejection the English representatives tactlessly left the congress and Burgundy and France remained to bargain unrestrained. The upshot was the Treaty of Arras, which extinguished the flickering chances of further English success.

The Treaty of Arras is characteristic of an age fundamentally selfish, of one in which the generous principles of chivalry served only as an excuse for the establishment of ostentatious Orders. By the treaty, John the Fearless was exonerated of all guilt in the murder of Louis of Orléans; Burgundy received extensive concessions of land, was excused from making any military contribution to the armies of Charles VII, but empowered to call upon France for support in the event of an attack upon Burgundy. The terms were severe, but Charles was well advised to accept, for the severance of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance was the surest means of hastening the collapse of the English power in France.

How much England depended upon the Burgundian alliance became obvious immediately after the Burgundian withdrawal. Paris was English only because Paris was Burgundian. Within the year the Constable de Richemont was able to enter the capital and effect the return of the court and Parlement to their ancient headquarters (April, 1436). For the next nine years the war entered

*The conference
at Arras*

*The Treaty of
Arras*

Results

upon another period of sluggish activity culminating in 1444 in a five years' truce. But Charles VII had suddenly come to life. After the Treaty of Arras he began to display a most unexpected activity, turning his attention to the restoration of order and the formation of what—with a pardonable anachronism—might be called a "New Model Army."

The States-General of 1439

In 1439 Charles summoned the States-General and procured the passage of the *Ordonnance sur la Gendarmerie*. To protect the country from the lawless bands of brigands it was provided that every company must receive a royal license and that the captains of such companies be appointed by the king. The new companies, known as *compagnies d'ordonnance*, were cavalry units. An infantry force, known as the *Francs-Archers* (free archers), was organized from the militia contingents of the towns. To pay for the maintenance of this new force, the States-General authorized the establishment of a land tax, the *taille*, which fell for the most part upon the people, for nobles who did not cultivate their lands were declared exempt.

The English collapse

The *Ordonnance*, although in theory a temporary measure, became an essential part of the military and financial administration and resulted in putting the king in possession of a permanent standing army and a permanent source of revenue. With the "New Model Army" the war was renewed in 1449. The English power of resistance had been sapped by dissensions and threats of civil war at home, and scarce more than a year was required to overrun and conquer Normandy. The success of the French in the North was duplicated in Guienne. At Châtillon (July 17, 1453) "stout Talbot," last of the great old war-dogs, fell before the superior tactics and artillery of the French. Two months later Bordeaux opened its gates to the French, and the long quarrel was at an end. Only Calais remained to England, a reminder of the glory of Crécy and of a lost kingdom.

France at the end of the war

France, at the end of the Hundred Years' War, was, all things considered, in a better position than the one she had occupied in the days of the first of the Valois. Most obviously France, that is to say that part of the country under the immediate direction of the crown, was much larger since the expulsion of the English from Guienne. But of greater significance for the future was the real increase in the power of the king. The long war and the political and social disruption involved had advanced rather than retarded

the growth of monarchy. The three great obstacles, actual or potential, to a centralized monarchy had been a jealous nobility, a wealthy bourgeoisie, and a tax-granting States-General; and these three, at the end of the war, had either ceased to be a menace or had become allies of the crown. The nobility had suffered most. Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt, and a hundred obscurer skirmishes and sieges had greatly thinned their numbers; royal proclamations against private war had reduced their privileges, and the widening activities of the royal court had restricted their influence. Unless the nobility could organize in concerted opposition — and there was little likelihood of anything more than a temporary agreement — the only nobles to be feared at all were the appanaged members of the royal family — Burgundy, Anjou, Bourbon, and Orléans.

The wealthy bourgeoisie, through the States-General, had almost acquired recognition as participating members of the government. But the collapse of the reform movement of 1356-1357, and again in 1413, discouraged further efforts along that line, and merchants and towns looked to the king to maintain the internal peace and order so essential to their prosperity. The towns welcomed the royal officials and the royal garrisons, but the price of protection was the loss of the old autonomy. On the other hand, the king, by establishing the principle that the royal decision was sufficient in determining the needs of the kingdom, continued to levy the *taille* on the pretext of maintaining the army, and so did away with the necessity of appealing to the States-General. The bourgeoisie maintained a favorable position by reason of their wealth; many became valuable and influential counselors of the king, and not a few received a title and a coveted coat of arms.

If the merchant was doing well, and the wealth amassed by Jacques Coeur indicates the possibilities, the craftsman had no such social prospects. Wages were high, expenses were low, but the guilds had become exclusive and granted the title of "master craftsman" only after tests involving prohibitive expenditure of time and money. In self-defense the craftsmen formed journeyman guilds and *compagnonnages* of their own.

Whether the condition of the peasant had improved or not is difficult to say. It is undeniable that the years of war, pestilence, and brigandage had been years of hardship and trial for the agriculturist. There is evidence that wide tracts of arable land returned to waste, and it is certain that many peasants joined the brigands

*The monarchy
and the
bourgeoisie*

The peasant

or attached themselves to the *Kingdom of the Beggars*, which François Villon has described in immortal verse. But there are signs of definite improvement; the Black Death had created a shortage of labor which compelled landlords to increase wages, commute predial service for money payments, or lease land upon attractive terms. Any one of these measures would tend to bring amelioration. The acquisition of land by *métayage*, a sort of stock-and-land lease, or of cattle by lease à *cheptal*, a form of hire-purchase or installment, indicates a growing prosperity which occasional inventories seem to confirm. A day laborer was able to leave his widow "two feather-beds and pillows, fifteen linen sheets, four striped yellow counterpanes, one tin wash-tub, two brass water jugs," and a miscellaneous assortment of farm implements.

Indeed, the literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the building undertaken by the Duke of Berry, Charles V, or Jacques Coeur, the account books of the brothers Bonis, substantial merchants of Montauban, or the charming *Household Book* written by an unknown merchant of Paris, all give the impression that there was a good deal of solid comfort to balance the miseries of war. Clothing was ornate but made of excellent material; food ranged through an infinite variety from salted whale to rose leaves served as salad. Jean Duchesne, a lawyer, paid something over a thousand dollars for flowers and minstrels to grace a wedding.

There was considerable intellectual curiosity, too, which affected a fair proportion of the population. The University of Paris, immersed in theology and the great problem of Church reform, did little to satisfy the new craving. The middle class, with its solid and literal way of taking life, seized avidly upon anthologies and digests, pocket encyclopedias containing a maze of information upon all possible subjects. "Unimaginative and uninspired, the merchant and craftsman demanded that his poetry should criticize life, that his Muse should sing only to enforce rules of conduct, and that his satires be written with ethical intent."³ The alchemist and the astrologer were at the height of their influence and numbered kings and princes among their devotees.

Good literature was not lacking, and there are signs of the Renaissance in the works of Froissart and Deschamps, in the poetry of Christine of Pisa, Alain Chartier, Charles of Orléans and François

³ Robinson, M. F., "Private Life in France," *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1891.

Villon, not to overlook the spirit of freedom and humaneness that breathes in the mystery and morality plays, the *sotties* and farces of the developing drama. Breton publishers kept scores of copyists at work reproducing the ballades and romances which luxury demanded. The *Book of Hours*, made by the brothers Limbourg for the Duke of Berry, is a triumph of the illuminator's art, while the Well of Moses, the Tomb of Philip of Burgundy, the paintings of Van Eyck and Van der Weyden (though done in Flanders) reveal the approach of a new age.

There was one touch of darkness before the dawn. Morality, public or private, remained at its low ebb, and superstition held captive men who were seeking all sorts of information, men who knew how to make roses bloom in winter time or to grow grapes without stones. The fear of the Devil chilled the hearts of men as never before, and sorcery became "the religious malady of the century." The haunting fear of death and the crushing recognition of sin drove thousands on weary pilgrimages to distant shrines, inspired the dark morbidity which produced the *Danse Macabre*, or more often encouraged a hedonism which expressed itself in libertinism. There was a surfeit of selfishness, and when Charles VI was ill there was none to comfort him save his daughter-in-law, who sat long hours playing at cards with the demented king whom the rest of the family had abandoned.

Morality

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CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRIUMPH OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY

CHARLES VII left the French monarchy well on the road to absolutism—the struggle for the recovery of lands held by the English had reduced the number and diverted the attention of the nobility; the difficulties and dangers of travel, to say nothing of the expense involved, restrained whatever desire the States-General may have had for active participation in government; while the possession of a standing army and a permanent revenue—avowedly to support it—had given the crown weapons of incalculable value.

*The situation
in 1461*

But there were obstacles yet to be cleared away before a French king could say “I am the State” and the nation would acquiesce. If the nobility in general had been weakened it had not been destroyed, and there were still feudatories which escaped the immediate jurisdiction of the crown and disturbed the territorial unity of the kingdom. Nearly twenty appanaged districts, including the great power of Burgundy, and a number of feudatories, proud Brittany among them, remained as tangible limitations to the power of the sovereign. The removal of these restrictions was in large part effected in the next two reigns, and medieval France became a thing of the past.

The man who succeeded Charles VII in 1461 was one of the strangest of strange kings. Louis XI was approaching forty when he inherited the throne and had already given evidence of ability as a political intriguer. For years he had opposed the counselors of Charles VII and had embarrassed, when he could not frustrate, the royal policy. His obstructionist tactics had compelled him to flee from his father’s wrath and seek refuge in Burgundy, where he remained until he became King of France. Philip of Burgundy was harboring a fox that would one day eat his chickens, for Louis had realized the menace of Burgundy to the French kingdom and had determined to remove it.

*Louis XI
(1461-1483)*

For the moment everything was serene. Philip escorted his royal

Louis begins to rule

protégé to his coronation at Rheims and later to Paris. There was something ironic in this whole proceeding, for Philip was glorious in raiment and entourage. Louis was drab in coarse wool and battered pilgrim's hat. For a while Louis allowed Philip to squander his own money in pageants and shows, but he displayed an unwillingness to appoint Burgundians to positions of influence and revealed a disquieting impatience to begin to rule his kingdom. When Louis did commence, he left no doubt in even the dullest minds that he intended to be a king. Rather impetuously he removed from office most of his father's counselors — though he recalled some of them later — and proceeded to enforce the royal rights against the nobility to the full extent of the law. Such a procedure at the very commencement of the reign created grave anxiety and resentment among the nobles, who, unable or unwilling to see that the world was changing, clung to their ancient privileges. They had no political program and no more complicated desire than to restore the good old days when each was lord in his own domain and the king a *primus inter pares*.

"The League of the Public Good"

Under Charles the Bold of Burgundy (acting for the present in his aging father's stead) and Francis of Brittany, and with Louis' brother, Charles of Berry, as a nominal leader, the nobles staged their last serious resistance to the growing kingship, and carried on a tragic-comic struggle from 1465 to 1472. The "war" is full of significance. To begin with, the nobles, unwittingly perhaps, revealed what a change had come over feudalism since the days of the Capets, for they were impudent enough to represent themselves as the champions of the people against the tyranny of an unjust king. They dignified their coalition with the title of "The League of the Public Good" and called upon the good people to join them in the cause of the common weal. More important is the fact that the good people failed to be interested in this propaganda. The king might be a tyrant, but with all its defects, a strong central government was a reasonable guarantee of order, the great desideratum of the merchants and the good towns. In any case it was better to be ruled by a lion than ravaged by a pack of wolves.

In 1465, 1467, 1472, The League of the Public Good mobilized its forces and compelled the king to terms. Despite their protestations of seeking the general welfare, it was obvious from the start that the League leaders were pushed on by motives that were at once selfish and inimical to the extension of the royal power in the

hands of Louis XI, or any other king. In 1465, after an indecisive encounter at Montlhéry, Louis signed the Treaty of Conflans by which he gave Normandy as an appanage to his brother, Charles of Berry. It is easy to see in this the hand of Charles the Bold, since Normandy, lying between Burgundy and Brittany, gave the "commonwealers" a continuous stretch of territory from the Rhine to the Atlantic and blocked the extension of royal power to the north. When Louis had succeeded in dissolving the League by bribes or tactful preferments, had reoccupied Normandy, and by an act of peculiar folly had fallen into the hands of Charles the Bold at Peronne, it was Champagne that Charles the Bold insisted should be given to the Duke of Berry, for Champagne was contiguous to Burgundy and would block the advance of royalty to the east. And when Louis induced his brother to accept Guienne in exchange for Champagne, the League rose for the third and last time, and Charles the Bold demonstrated his public spirit by expressing the hope that he would see six kings in France.

The League of the Public Good failed as it deserved to fail. Although joined, at times, by a score of powerful nobles, it did not attract the bulk of the lesser nobility nor did it gain the support of the clergy. Far from winning over the people it found the good towns solidly behind the king. Unable to agree upon anything save opposition to the king and the acquisition of personal power, it had no inherent strength and was defenseless against the appeal of the king to the ambition or greed of its members. The net result was to contrast the essential weakness and futility of feudal combines with the strength of a kingship which could rely on the middle classes; and to create an enmity between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy which could end only in the elevation of Burgundy to an independent kingdom or its absorption by the crown of France. This was the problem which now occupied the King of France.

The two men who were thus committed to a bitter life and death struggle were as opposite in character as they were opposed in policy. Charles the Bold was a most unpleasant person whose marital fidelity stands out as his one redeeming virtue. He was a man of dour taciturnity and had long periods of melancholy punctuated with violent outbursts of temper. He was reasonably well educated and followed the fashion of the time in playing Mæcenas. He inherited all the Burgundian love of display and insisted upon all the painful requirements of etiquette. He was insufferably proud, obstinate

*The Treaty of
Conflans*

*The League
fails*

*Charles the
Bold*

to a fault, and his unwillingness or inability to ask or accept advice emphasized his mediocrity as a general and his insufficiency as a statesman. His pride was only exceeded by his ambition. It was his purpose to create an independent kingdom of Burgundy which, like the old Lotharingia, should stretch from the North Sea to the Mediterranean and form a "Middle Kingdom" between France and the Empire. He had even dreamed of becoming King of France or Emperor of the Romans. He did not realize that erecting a middle kingdom was an infinitely easier task than keeping it independent when once established.

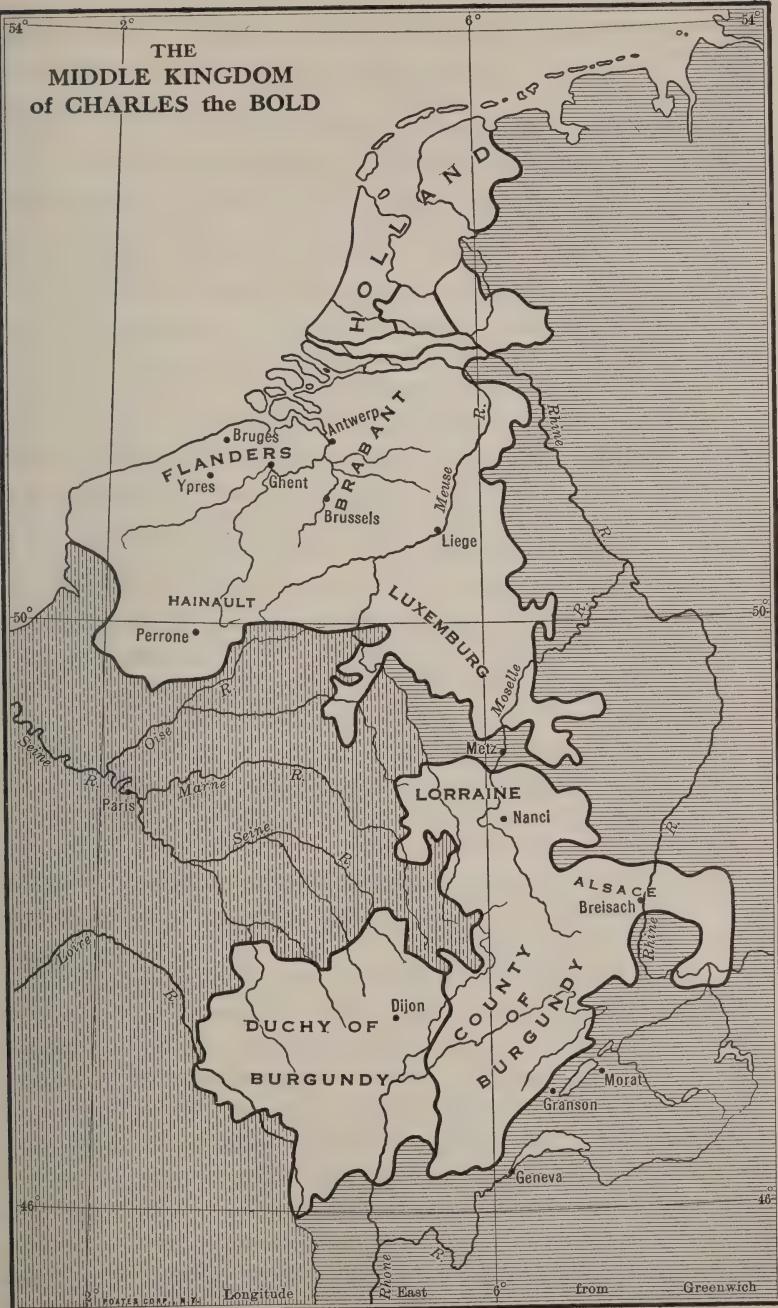
Unattractive as was Charles the Bold—the "Impetuous" or "Imprudent" would better describe him—his rival made, at first acquaintance, a much less favorable impression. There was nothing regal about him, thin limbed, knock-kneed, probably epileptic, and possibly a "victim of cerebral congestion." But his flashing dark eyes gave evidence of great vitality. In contrast to the gorgeous Burgundian, Louis had a definite dislike for anything ostentatious; he affected coarse clothing, preferred such a habitation as any well-to-do merchant might possess, enjoyed the society of the upper middle classes and appreciated the "salty wit" which enlivened their dinner parties. He made it his practice to surround himself with these "good citizens" and regularly put up at their houses whenever he journeyed through his kingdom. His one personal extravagance was hunting, which absorbed a considerable proportion of his income. He had a very hasty temper, was restless, impatient, and such a babbler that even he himself admitted that he talked more than was good for him. He was bluff and outspoken and tempered neither his views nor his vocabulary in talking of, or to, the members of the opposite sex.

Louis intended that his rule should be a personal one, unhampered by the restraints of council. Counselors, of course, he had to have, but he selected them with care, rewarded them lavishly for devotion to his service, and punished disobedience or opposition with a severity that discouraged imitation. As a result he was well served, though the motives were but fear or greed. Charles the Bold called his rival the "Universal Spider," a reproach which, considering the source, might well be a tribute. In the field of politics Louis was utterly unscrupulous. He showed a genius for political intrigue that was often Italian and sometimes Machiavellian. He had spies at every court and was most irritatingly successful in getting posses-

Louis XI

*Louis as a
diplomat*

THE
MIDDLE KINGDOM
of CHARLES the BOLD



sion of incriminating documents. He negotiated with everyone, played his enemies off against each other, and by dealing with individuals weakened the strength of coalitions. He had great (and, for the most part, confirmed) confidence in bribery, being neither niggardly in his offers nor deterred by the rank or position of the bribee. He was amazingly superstitious, but his religious observances were not devoid of political application. He spent vast sums in honor of the saints, building churches, providing reliquaries and ornaments of price. But Louis expected a return for these tangible marks of his devotion much as he expected a return for his favors to men. The saints were to intercede for him, and as he bribed the vassals of his enemies so he paid homage to their favorite saints. His many pilgrimages served at once as an exercise of religion and an opportunity to gather information of a political nature. Louis owes much of his success as a king and his reputation as the "most terrible ruler that ever France had" to his own astuteness, intelligence, unscrupulousness, and constant attention to the details of governing, but it must not be forgotten that his enemies were divided, and for the most part of but mediocre ability, and that he had inherited valuable assets in an army, a revenue, and the conviction of the towns that their interests lay in the support of the central government.

Charles the Bold may be excused for his ambition to become a king, for he had inherited an impressive congeries of territories. The dukes of Burgundy had acquired Flanders and Artois, as a result of the marriage between John the Fearless and Margaret of Flanders, and had come into possession of Brabant, Luxembourg, and Hainault. These lands had only a personal unity, for the laws and customs of each were unaffected by the rest, and, what was a more serious obstacle to political strength, the lands were not contiguous but cut in two by the duchy of Lorraine, which was German, and the county of Champagne, which was French. To transform a personal union into a strong political union it was necessary for Charles to acquire a single title to all his lands—in other words, to become a king instead of remaining a duke and five counts—and to get possession of Lorraine and Champagne. He began with Lorraine.

The titular head of Lorraine was Sigismund of Tyrol, and Sigismund was in dire straits to procure some ready money to redeem a promise made to the Swiss League. Charles, confident of Sigismund's inability to repay, advanced fifty thousand florins and took Alsace

and the district known as the Breisgau as security for the loan. Once this territory came into his hands, Charles proceeded to administer it as though it were definitely his own and, to act as governor, sent his agent, Peter of Hagenbach, a man whose arbitrary rule was conspicuous in an age little hampered by legal niceties. This establishment of power in Alsace and the Breisgau was a potential menace to the Swiss, who at once took alarm at the arrival of Burgundian strength at their very frontier.

Farther north Charles strengthened his position by seizing the duchy of Guelders on the most shadowy of pretexts, and by compelling the Duke René of Lorraine to recognize him as a "protector" and to permit the towns along the Moselle to be garrisoned by Burgundian troops as an earnest of good intent. With nearly every essential for a kingdom, except the title, in his possession, Charles opened negotiations with the Emperor Frederick III. At Trèves Charles offered his daughter, Mary, as the bride of Frederick's son, Maximilian, if, in return, the Emperor would recognize Burgundy as a kingdom. Charles could also contemplate the pleasure of being the founder of an imperial dynasty when his grandson should wear the crown of the Cæsars. Frederick, however, was quite excusably intimidated by Charles, who was inclined to rush matters along with his usual impetuosity; and was quite probably bribed by Louis XI, who had no desire to see his ducal enemy become a king. At any rate, Frederick slipped away from Trèves without the formality of a farewell, leaving Charles angry, insulted, and, for the moment, checked.

In the meanwhile, things had not been going well in Alsace. Peter of Hagenbach had been vigorous in suppressing lawlessness, but his methods had been severe and his attempts to reëstablish an ordered administration had involved heavy taxation. The towns organized themselves into a "Lower Union," and to increase their powers of resistance entered into an alliance with the Swiss Confederation. Here was excellent material for the exercise of political intrigue, and Louis XI did not overlook it. He negotiated at once with Sigismund, with the "Lower Union," and with the Swiss Confederation, an organization which he respected and with which he was on excellent terms. To hamper Charles in the north, while he was massing obstacles for him in the south, Louis induced René of Lorraine to sever his connections with Burgundy. He even succeeded in reconciling Sigismund with the Swiss, and Sigismund was able to pro-

*Charles and
Lorraine*

*Peter of
Hagenbach*

cure money from the interested generosity of the Swabian towns to lift the mortgage on Alsace. Charles, for his part, negotiated everywhere, but, while he was assured of the good will of the Duke of Milan and of help from Louis' sister, the Dowager Duchess of Savoy, he was obliged to rely upon the resources of his own dominions.

Granson In November of 1475 Charles rapidly and brilliantly conquered Lorraine and set out to reduce the rebellious Alsatians to obedience. Pushing into Alsace he captured the town of Granson, but was surprised and routed by the Swiss army (March, 1476). Cautious procedure was Charles' cue, but with the impetuosity so characteristic of him he took up the offensive once again, attacked Morat which was held by the Swiss, and lost the bulk of his army, his political influence, and whatever of military reputation he may ever have possessed (June, 1476). Neither this defeat, the obvious unwillingness of Burgundy to supply more troops and money, nor the flat refusal of Flanders to contribute further support to a war of no patent commercial advantage, could deter Charles from his ambitious course. His enemies were greatly encouraged, and René of Lorraine swept into his lost province and captured the strong city of Nancy. In the very height of winter, with a mere handful of troops and in the face of a considerable force of Lorainers, Swiss, and Alsatians, Charles ignored the advice of wiser heads and advanced to regain Nancy. His army was completely shattered and Charles himself was slain (January, 1477). A frozen corpse, stripped alike of armor and clothing, pierced with wounds and bitten by wolves, recognizable only by an old scar, the characteristically long nails, and two (properly) missing teeth — such was the incongruous end of an imperial dreamer.

Morat Louis had played a skillful part in supporting opposition to Burgundy, and there was great joy in Paris when the news from Nancy was announced. The death of Charles the Bold freed Louis from a dangerous neighbor and deprived the French nobles of the one man who might have made effective their attempt to shackle the royal power. Burgundy now lay practically helpless before the French king, but Louis acted, on the whole, very foolishly.

Nancy The duchy of Burgundy could not be inherited by females, and as Charles left only a daughter, Mary, this important territory reverted to the French crown. But Mary could and did inherit the rest of her father's possessions, including Flanders, Franche-Comté

(held of the Empire), and Artois. Louis was tactless enough to arouse the towns of Flanders by his seizure of Artois and Franche-Comté, his invasion of Flanders itself, and his expressed desire to marry Mary to his son Charles. In part terrorized by this impetuous wooing, and in part conceding to the wishes of the Flemish towns, Mary married the bridegroom selected for her at Trèves four years before. By her marriage with Maximilian of Austria, Mary provided Europe with a political problem which was to take two centuries to solve. Maximilian at once took up arms to recover the captured portions of his wife's inheritance, but no settlement was reached until Mary's death in 1482, when Louis and Maximilian came to terms. By the Treaty of Arras Louis gave up his claim to Flanders, which henceforth came under the influence of Austria; but he secured an option upon Franche-Comté and Artois by arranging a marriage between the Dauphin, Charles, and the infant Margaret, daughter of Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, with the coveted district as a dowry.

Death, which no man feared more than Louis XI, was singularly beneficent to the French king. It had given him Burgundy; in 1481 René of Anjou died without direct heirs, and in the same year Charles of Maine, who had inherited Provence, also passed away. All this great territory was attached to the royal domain. By the end of Louis' reign, Brittany alone of the great fiefs enjoyed any degree of political independence.

The government of Louis XI was an intensely personal one, so much so, in fact, that the English Fortescue in his work *In Praise of the Laws of England* uses him as a splendid example of the tyrant and the despot. The judgment is a little severe and is affected, perhaps, by the moral character of the subject. Louis had no doubts as to the divine origin of the kingship, but he was far too intelligent to believe in his personal infallibility. He habitually consulted men of learning, merchants, bankers, or representative citizens on matters requiring expert knowledge or affecting the general welfare. He used the States-General, as Philip the Fair before him, frankly as a body to give its approval to his policy. He called it but once, but there seems to be no evidence that the States-General had any objection to this enforced idleness, and even the provincial assemblies called themselves but rarely. So long as government was good, though hard, they were content through fear of worse.

Louis XI may have felt that he was not answerable to the law in

The government of Louis XI

the ordinary way, but he never felt that he should violate it. The king was an exceptional person, but the king had exceptional duties in consequence, and not the least of these was the nurture of the public good and the maintenance of the law by example no less than by precept. Louis made few changes in the form of government, but he altered much of the spirit. The old institutions were retained but were treated rather as agents than as coöoperators in the work of administration.

As a ruler Louis XI was unscrupulous and efficient. He organized special courts which avoided the legal niceties of Parlement. So long as his ministers performed their duties and obeyed his commands he did not look closely into their private lives. His administration was expensive and taxation was heavy. "He took everything and he spent it all," remarked the contemporary Comines.

The towns were of great assistance to this growing royalty. Not only did they supply the ever essential wealth, but they were more than able to hold their own against the feudal barons and were active centers of royalist propaganda. Louis thoroughly appreciated the value of the towns both as a source of revenue and as a political asset. His agents often interfered directly in the municipal administration, and in chartered towns, which theoretically managed their own affairs, he strove to restrict the local authority to a few leading families who might the more easily be controlled. Louis' interest in the upper middle class led him to encourage the development of corporations and merchant guilds at the expense of the individual, but his concern for industry and commerce was genuine, and his regulations were not without benefit. He was energetic in working for the speedier and safer transportation of goods; he imported silk workers from Italy in the dual hope of solving a present unemployment problem and of creating a source of future wealth; he pushed forward the exploitation of mines; sought to reduce the price of spices by sending out his own fleets to Alexandria; attempted to revive the dying fairs and markets; and encouraged foreign merchants to come and buy. As Philip IV he thought of establishing a uniform system of weights and measures, but like Philip he left this work undone. Louis did one thing that no one had done before: he urged the clergy to eke out their dwindling revenues by engaging in trade or commerce, and there may have been a sincere economic motive behind his suggestion that nuns might profitably employ their time in the weaving or spinning of silk.

In 1482 Louis retired from active public life and shut himself up in his palace at Plessis-les-Tours. But lest men should think that he were dying or had lost his grip on the government, orders, proclamations, and instructions poured over the country in a veritable flood. Here the king waited for the death he so much dreaded, fortifying himself against present infirmities and future uncertainty by crowding the palace with doctors, astrologers, charlatans of every kind, monks, and hermits. Here he tasted nostrums and put his faith in relics. As the end approached his natural courage returned, and he faced death calmly and "as brave as ever a man did." He died, still talking, August 30, 1483.

*His death
(1483)*

The heir to the throne, Charles VIII, was only thirteen years old, and the prospect of a regency revived the glimmering hopes of the nobles. But Louis XI had intrusted the realm to his capable daughter, Anne, and her still more capable husband, Peter of Beaujeu. Anne possessed much of her father's energy, a good deal of his astuteness, and she could be quite unscrupulous if such a course seemed advisable.

The nobles objected to the control of the Beaujeus and urged the summoning of the States-General. With political fatuousness they still flaunted the transparent banner of reform, while the Beaujeus prepared to win over the States-General to confirm their position as regents. The States-General had little confidence in the ability of the reforming nobles and still less in their sincerity. It approved the regency of the Beaujeus and attempted to exercise some control over the government by restricting the collection of the *taille* to a period of two years. Whatever further plans the States-General may have had were frustrated, for it was dismissed with thanks, and was not to meet again for nearly a century.

The Beaujeus

The nobles, beaten by the States-General, fell back upon the old method of revolt. In 1485 they began the "Mad War" or the "War of Fools," which for three years disturbed but did not seriously threaten the kingdom. Noble coalitions were always more formidable in appearance than in fact, and this one was no exception. Many joined the coalition, but few were able to make any effective contribution. The ringleaders were Francis II of Brittany and Louis of Orléans, while Maximilian of Austria, René of Lorraine, and Richard III of England added somewhat of prestige and gave an international color to the affair.

*The "Mad
War"*

The coalition had no inherent strength, for personal ambition

which had led the nobles into the movement could lead them as readily out of it again. René withdrew when Anne offered him the county of Bar; Bosworth Field eliminated Richard III from French politics as it eliminated him from English; Louis of Orléans was defeated at St Aubin in Brittany and held a captive at Bourges; Francis II died in September, 1488.

There remained Maximilian, and Maximilian was a real danger, despite his difficulties in Germany and the opposition of his Flemish subjects. The death of Francis II had given the important duchy of Brittany to his daughter, Anne, who thereupon became a much sought bride. First in the field were Louis of Orléans and Maximilian, and in 1490 Anne married (by proxy) the heir to the Holy Roman Empire.

This arrangement was highly prejudicial to the stability of the French crown, for a consolidation of Flanders and Brittany was as full of menace as ever Burgundy had been. The Beaujeus acted quickly. Charles was sent into Brittany at the head of a French army and, aided by a political disruption within the duchy, seized the important city of Nantes. Maximilian was prevented by disturbances in Hungary from sending any assistance, and in December, 1491, Anne gave her hand to Charles VIII, in person. Brittany was not yet officially incorporated into the kingdom of France, but since Anne agreed to marry no one but Charles' successor to the French throne, Breton independence had but a generation to run, at the most. The marriage of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany marked also the end of the Beaujeu regency; the *Grande Madame* retired very unwillingly from a life she had come to enjoy, and Charles VIII proceeded to rule alone.

Not quite alone, for Charles VIII was easily flattered and still more easily led, so that the government, while a personal one, was really in the hands of favorites. Charles VIII had few qualifications for his new office. He was physically unattractive and was not remarkable for his intelligence. Like many of the Valois before him, he loved display and reveled in grand designs. He listened eagerly to any wild scheme that promised glory or renown, and as he never bothered about details there was little that seemed impossible to him. It was quite in keeping with his whole character that he should set out for Italy with the immediate intention of becoming King of Naples as a preliminary to an attack upon Constantinople.

France had been interested in Italy for over two centuries; more recently Charles VI had actually interfered and occupied Genoa with French troops (1396), while Louis XI's far-reaching intrigues had included negotiations with Ludovico il Moro, who, in part, owed his position as tyrant of Milan to the support of the French king. The claim of Charles VIII to the Neapolitan throne was shaky beyond words.

At the moment the House of Aragon was in possession of Naples, in the person of Ferrante. Charles VIII's claim to Naples was founded on the historic occupation of that country by Charles of Anjou, brother of St Louis. But the House of Anjou had been expelled at the time of the "Sicilian Vespers," and, in any case, Charles of Anjou had admitted the kingdom to be held as a fief of the papal see. A second claim rested on the doubtful will of Queen Joanna II of Naples, who at her death in 1435 had bequeathed her kingdom to René, Duke of Anjou, who left his claim to his nephew, Charles of Maine, who willed it to Louis XI. The lawyers had little difficulty in confounding the claims of these two houses of Anjou. Furthermore, Louis of Orléans, cousin and brother-in-law of Charles VIII, claimed the duchy of Milan because his grandfather had married Valentina Visconti (1389).

But legal claims are secondary to opportunity, and the moment seemed favorable for an invasion. Italy was not in complete disintegration, but it was far from offering any united resistance. Five states, diverse in every respect, struggled to maintain their independence and watched with jealousy any attempt to establish a hegemony. In the north, control was divided between the republic of Venice, the duchy of Milan and the Florentine Republic; diagonally across the center of the peninsula stretched the long corridor of the papal "States," while in the south lay the kingdom of Naples. There was no possibility of these five "States" coming to any lasting agreement, and each would view with satisfaction the weakening of any neighbor by any force which would not threaten it in turn.

As early as 1492 Ludovico il Moro had come to an understanding with Charles VIII and early in the following year had formed an alliance with Venice against the kingdom of Naples. When Ferrante of Naples died (in January of 1494) the time seemed opportune for Charles VIII to invade the peninsula. His army had for a long time been assembling and was respectable in numbers and equipment. But it was still, in the main, a medieval army, albeit one of

Italy

French claims

The Italian situation

Charles plans to invade

the last of the feudal hosts. It consisted largely of cavalry, both heavy and light armed, the warriors encased *cap-à-pie* in plate armor which marked the point of perfection of protective clothing, "at the very moment when the employment of artillery was about to render it useless." A body of mercenary foot soldiers, Swiss and German, and a detachment of artillery contributed to the fighting strength. The end of the Middle Ages was in sight when knights of the old school began to curse the gunpowder "that permitted any villainous knave to kill a brave man."

He enters Italy Charles moved into Italy in the late summer of 1494, reasonably sure of support from Ludovico il Moro and from his own relative, the Duke of Savoy. The invasion quickly assumed the appearance of a triumphal journey, for Florence and the papal "States," instinctively hostile, masked their fear under the pretense of welcome. Celebrations and pageants were everywhere in vogue, and the soldiers heard little more terrifying than the roll of parade drums and the fanfare of trumpets. Magnificent it surely was, war it certainly was not. Christmas was celebrated in Rome, but the slowness of the advance was due to feasting, not to fighting. To make matters even easier, Alphonse of Naples abdicated in favor of his son, Ferdinand II, and so paralyzed whatever of defense the Neapolitans may have planned. On February 22, the French entered Naples, and Charles and Anne climaxed five months of celebrations with a double coronation.

Charles in Naples But Naples was easier to win than to hold. The kingdom was still strongly feudal, and the capture of the capital did not involve the submission of the nobility, who retired into their strong castles which were scattered throughout the land. Further, the French began to arouse the bitter indignation of their new subjects by frank and widespread spoliation. Positions and estates were bestowed upon Frenchmen or upon Italians no less alien to the Neapolitans. Charles made no apparent effort either to restrain the greed of his followers or to establish any form of government which might conciliate nobles or commoners. He amused himself in a royal way while French arrogance destroyed what native sympathy remained.

Careless of the discontent which was becoming articulate about him, Charles was equally oblivious to the storm clouds gathering in the north. Maximilian of Austria and Ferdinand of Spain, equally jealous of any extension of French power, began to stir up disaffection in Italy. Ludovico il Moro abandoned his French associations

and posed as a rather disconcerting champion of Italian independence. In March, 1495, these three worthies, with Ferdinand of Aragon, the Pope, and the Republic of Venice, formed what was advertised as the "purely defensive" League of Venice, but which occasioned no end of joy to all ill-wishers of France.

The League of Venice

Two months later Charles VIII found it advisable to return home. There were no celebrations prepared for him as he moved northward, but the League was preparing to cut him off in the foothills of the Alps. At Fornova, on July 5, 1495, Charles and his army fought their way through the forces of the League after a battle of tremendous confusion and reached France in safety. But Naples could not be held; Maximilian was mobilizing his forces along the Rhine, Ferdinand and Isabella were threatening at the Pyrenees. At this crisis Charles VIII neglected to lower his head as he passed through a low doorway and the destinies of France fell to his cousin, Louis of Orléans.

The battle of Fornova

With Charles VIII medieval France may be said to disappear. All those things that are so characteristic of the Middle Ages; the feudal king limited by his feudal barons, the guild merchants and craft-guilds, the painfully inscribed manuscripts, the monastic fervor, the endless discussions of "quiddities" and "universals," all were losing their clearest features in the process of transformation. France, too, was on the threshold of the Renaissance, for surely that term need not be restricted to art and literature.

France at the end of the fifteenth century had reached a high state of unification, although some districts, the lands of the royal family, and an indeterminate number of *seigneuries* escaped complete and immediate control. Feudalism had ceased to be a dangerous rival and was almost negligible as a menace. All the weapons were in the hands of the king. He had an army and he had money; he had the Parlement to register the royal decrees the council to assert the royal policy, and the courts to uphold the royal prerogative. The States-General, which might have been a check, had fallen into a lethargy, while the Church had suffered enormously during the long years of schism and reform. The politics of France were modern, and political theory was looking to the absolutism of the Roman law, to the neglect of the medieval concept of a king bound by the law and legislating with the consent of the governed. The opening words of Charles VIII's ordinances, "Since it is our pleasure," indicate that medieval kingship has passed away in France.

France at the end of the Middle Ages

In other ways was revealed the passing of the old order. The artistic and literary activity of the period of the Hundred Years' War continued with little abatement. Louis XI was not the type to make an ideal Mæcenas, but he was an intelligent patron. He had a court painter in Fouquet and gave encouragement to John Bourdichon, whose illustrations for a "Book of Hours" made for Anne of Brittany are among the best of their kind. Louis was interested in education, aided in the establishment of schools, and encouraged the setting up of a printing press in the Sorbonne. Under Charles VIII, the German scholar, Fichet, with his associate, Heynlin, began the publication of carefully prepared texts of the Classics, but not until 1476 was a chair of Greek established at the great University of Paris.

The North was far behind the South in the more conventional aspects of the Renaissance, for it was by nature more practical. But in politics and science it was really leading the way. Nothing furthered the rapid flowering of the Renaissance more than the series of experiments along the Rhine which ended in the printing press. Müller and Feuerbach were laying the foundations of a new astronomy and a new geography; Nicholas of Cues deserves recognition along with Marsiglio of Padua and Ficino, as one of the founders of the revived Christian Platonism. France was admittedly behind in this movement and was still importing her scholarship from Germany and her art from the Netherlands. But France had already produced François Villon and Antoine de la Sale, whose *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* reveals the new spirit of realism which cut at the very root of custom and tradition. In the drama, the miracle play enjoyed a tremendous popularity; *puy*s or clubs were organized to hold poetic festivals in honor of the Virgin, while the *Confrérie de la Passion* had a permanent theater in Paris. The farce produced one masterpiece in *Maître Pathelin*. Prose limped rather badly toward the close of the fifteenth century, but at least one work, the *Mémoires* of Philip of Comines brought French medieval literature to a worthy close. There is certainly something quite modern about Bernard Gros, who busied himself inventing hand-grenades and a "tela-vox."

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CHAPTER XXVII

STORM AND STRESS

THE pontificate of Boniface VIII marked a turning point in the history of the papacy from more than one point of view. For two and a half centuries following his death, the papacy and the Church became involved in such a welter of political and financial corruption, fell into such a state of moral degeneration and spiritual apathy that nothing less than the "Protestant Reformation" could shake them out of it. Three great periods of trial followed each other in rapid succession: the so-called "Babylonian Captivity," the Great Schism, and the Conciliar Movement. From these the Church emerged greatly shaken in prestige and with its claims of universality challenged by the rising states of Europe.

The Babylonian Captivity followed hard upon the death of Boniface VIII, for the short pontificate of Benedict XI was scarcely more than an interlude. With the election of Clement V began the long exile of the papacy from Rome, an exile which lasted seventy-three years (1305-1378). The reasons for the failure of Clement V to take up his residence at Rome are obscure; it may be that he feared the turbulence of the Romans, who might well be indisposed to a French Pope since the recent insult at Anagni, or it may be that he was induced to his "unholy resolve" by the political astuteness of the French court. In any case, he got no nearer Italy than the city of Lyons and for four years varied his headquarters between Lyons, Bordeaux, Poitiers, and Toulouse. In 1309 he removed to the Dominican monastery at Avignon, which city henceforth remained the seat of papal activities until the permanent return of the papacy to the Eternal City in 1378.

The pontificate of Clement V was characterized by a humiliating subjection to Philip the Fair of France and by the beginning of those ingenious methods of increasing the papal revenues (reduced by the inability of the Pope to collect the income from the papal "States," and by the general unwillingness of the Italians to support a non-resident French Pope), methods which led to widespread protest. His death (1314) did little to restore peace within the Church or

*The
Babylonian
Captivity
(1305-1378)*

*Clement V
(1305-1316)*

to bring back the papacy to Rome. For over two years the French and Italian cardinals in the college failed to agree upon a successor. In the midst of their wrangling, Dante was moved to write the cardinals reproaching them that "neglecting to guide the chariot of the Spouse along the manifest track of the Crucified, [they had] gone astray no otherwise than the false driver Phaeton," and urging them to restore the papacy to Rome. Direct pressure from the King of France finally forced them to a decision. Their choice was in many respects unfortunate, not the least of which was the fact that the new Pope had been the Archbishop of Avignon.

John XXII (1316-1334) was a little man, "like Zaccheus," but more than made up for his insignificant stature by his ability as a man of law and finance. He was attached to Avignon, and it was more than an augury when he removed from the Dominican monastery to the splendid palace he had constructed. Further, he immediately created eight new cardinals, seven of whom were Frenchmen, so that the Italians in the college were reduced to a helpless minority. John's conflict with the Emperor Lewis was typical of the French sympathies shown by all the Avignon popes. But it was as a financier that John was at his best, or worst, and the methods by which he sought to eke out the failing papal revenues were continued by his successors, and they offered perhaps the readiest target for the shafts of the reformers. The more flagrant of these financial abuses may be mentioned in passing.

The theory that the popes could exercise "the universal right of appointment" provided the most ample opportunity for the display of financial genius, since to the power of appointment was added the right of taxing the clergy. When the appointment, promotion, and taxation of one individual is subject to the arbitrary will of another, there is an obvious temptation to include advancement among things taxable. At Avignon this temptation was not resisted but, on the contrary, the Avignon popes developed a Midas-like ability to turn every perquisite of their office into golden profit.

For example, every archbishop, bishop, abbot, canon, or official appointed by the Pope paid a tax known as the "common service" (the *servitium commune*), as well as tips and fees to the horde of officials at the papal court. *Annates*, or "first fruits," were paid by appointees to lesser benefices, formerly to the local bishop, but now transmitted directly to Avignon. More pernicious was the development of "reservations," "provisions," and "expectations"

John XXII
(1316-1334)

*Financial
abuses*

"*Reserva-
tions*"

as a definite source of revenue. The system of reservations grew out of the custom of permitting the Pope to appoint to all benefices the incumbents of which had died at Rome. The simple expedient of omitting the term "at Rome" (*apud sedem apostolicam*), extending the principle at will, and on one pretext or another, including among the reserved appointments hundreds of benefices throughout the West, brought them within the reach of the *servitium communa*, and the *annates*. A "provision" was neither more nor less than the appointment of an individual to an office to supersede a candidate who had already been canonically elected to it; in other words, the substitution of appointment, which involved fees, for election, which need not. An "expectation," as the term would imply, was the promise to appoint to a benefice not yet vacant. This promise could of course be made to any number of persons.

Fees Less glaring, though not much less lucrative, were the miscellaneous fees which went to swell the papal revenues. Among these may be numbered the "visitation fees," paid at the required periodic visits of bishops to the papal court; fees for "dispensation" or the removal of the canonical disability placed upon relatives desiring to marry; for commutation of canonical penance; for "indulgence," "absolution," or any other favor or privilege. In addition there were presents (bribes?), taxes on all bulls issued, fines exacted in the papal court, and the prices demanded as a condition of obtaining any official position from doorkeeper to secretary at the papal *curia*.

Benedict XII
(1334-1342) The principal responsibility for this financial system rests on John XXII, but his successors certainly did not abolish it. Benedict XII (1334-1342), who immediately followed him on the papal chair, was of an entirely different type. The son of a miller, he had won advancement because of his piety rather than his political ability, for indeed he had none. Prudent and conscientious, yet of superabundant good humor, he thought continually of the moral reform of the clergy. The chief tangible result of his pontificate was the papal residence, half palace, half fortress, which still arouses the admiration of visitors and which is an absolute symbol of the medieval papacy, hopelessly entangled in things temporal and spiritual. Clement VI (1342-1352) was perhaps the worst of popes in many years. He used the power and influence at his command to provide for his numerous relatives and showed an impolitic zeal for good food, good horses, and pretty women. It was he who gave the

stamp of permanence to the sojourn at Avignon by purchasing the town from Queen Joanna of Naples.

Innocent VI (1352-1362) was a lawyer, a man of good morals and sound learning, a patron of the arts, an advocate of better and more extensive education, and as earnest as Benedict XII for the spiritual reform of the clergy. In his successor, Urban V, the Avignon papacy has its most attractive character. His intense spirituality and his high moral worth led to his somewhat tardy canonization in 1870. He felt that the proper seat of the papacy was at Rome, and in 1367 he actually returned to the imperial city, only to be convinced after three years' residence that the turbulence within the city and the general uncertainty of political conditions throughout the peninsula made a further stay inadvisable. But his successor, Gregory XI, was of sterner stuff. Convinced as early as 1374 that not only the dignity, but the very future of the papacy depended upon a return to Rome, he listened to the earnest appeal of St Catherine of Siena and disgusted the College of Cardinals by ending the Babylonian Captivity in 1377. Gregory has the incidental distinction of being the last Frenchman to occupy the chair of Peter.

Posterity has treated the Avignonese papacy with a severity which is not altogether deserved. In truth there is much to censure about the Babylonian Captivity, but most of the blame must be placed upon the College of Cardinals, which was freer in Avignon than in Rome; upon the vast horde of greedy officials who used their posts as sources of profit; and upon the vaster horde of office seekers which thronged the city and attracted ne'er-do-wells of both sexes. Against this condition individual popes were powerless. For the most part, the seven popes were men of ability and intelligence; one became a saint and six maintained a respectable standard of personal morality and were not without an appreciation of the value of things of the spirit. Avignon was bad and merited the bitter reproaches of Petrarch, but the Avignon popes, with the exception of Clement VI, cannot be included in the general condemnation. Yet the financial policy so solidly established at Avignon continued and served as a never-failing target for reformers and satirists for a century and a half to come. England replied to the ingenuity of papal finance by passing the statutes of Provisors (1351), which protected "English patrons against Papal 'provisions' to English benefices."

The end came partly through the sincere desire of Urban V and Gregory XI to end the anomaly and partly as the result of political

*Innocent VI
(1352-1362)*

*Results of
Avignon*

*The return to
Rome*

*Cardinal
Albornoz*

conditions in Italy. To begin with, the removal of the papacy to Avignon had had disastrous effects upon the revenue derivable from the papal "States," and there was a positive danger that these territories might escape from papal control altogether. Only the presence of the Pope at Rome could prevent this misfortune. In 1353 Cardinal Albornoz had been sent to Italy as the papal legate by Innocent VI, and within fourteen years that doughty churchman had cleared the land of brigands and had reduced the "States" of the Church to obedience. Fear of losing this recovered territory may well have acted as an incentive for a speedy return, and it is not without significance that Urban V made his journey to Rome the year of the completion of the Cardinal's administration (1367). A more immediate fear of French brigands, let loose during the Hundred Years' War, may also have provided a motive.

But the papacy only escaped from the frying pan of the Babylonian Captivity to fall into the fire of schism. Frenchmen, particularly the strong French element in the College of Cardinals, made no secret of their opposition to the removal of the papacy from Avignon, and the cardinals (some of whom had failed to follow Gregory XI to Italy) could be relied upon to do everything possible to substitute the Rhone for the Tiber. An opportunity came at the death of Gregory XI in 1378.

*The election
of 1378*

Of the sixteen cardinals who formed the electoral college, eleven were French by birth or political preference. This commanding numerical superiority was, however, counterbalanced by a complete lack of agreement among them. The Italian cardinals were anxious to end, or at least to lessen, their humiliating state of dependence upon the existent French majority, by the selection of a pope reasonably free from Valois influence. To these embarrassments was added the clamor of the Roman populace, which swarmed about the cardinals' palace and—not without threats of personal violence to the electors—demanded "a Roman, a Roman, or at least an Italian for Pope." Torn three ways by internal dissension and harassed by the excited citizens, the cardinals finally compromised on the Archbishop of Bari, who was a Neapolitan by birth, yet as a subject of the Sicilian branch of the House of Anjou would not arouse active opposition in France. He assumed the name of Urban VI.

Urban VI

The new Pope was temperamentally unfitted to handle a situation demanding considerate and placatory treatment. He was well

learned in canon law, but his erudition had degenerated into pedantry; a stern disciplinarian and a severe moralist, he made life miserable for all those whose duties brought them into immediate contact with him. His pedantic puritanism stimulated a natural arrogance and an acquired bigotry. He was completely innocent of tact, suspicious of everyone, and was possessed of a superlative genius for making personal enemies. He made no effort to conciliate any person or any interest; he refused to return to Avignon and thereby blasted the hopes of the French cardinals, and he alienated the Italians in the college by an offensive rudeness and ill-concealed threats of violence. Within a few months Urban VI had succeeded in causing the saintly Catherine of Siena — one of the most devoted adherents of the papacy — to plead with him that he "mitigate a little for the love of Christ," and in driving the disgusted and disillusioned cardinals to a desperate expedient.

From the town of Fonti they issued (August 2, 1378) an amazing document which denied the validity of Urban's election for the *The schism* somewhat tardy reason that the violence of the Roman populace had interfered with the free exercise of their electoral privilege. Violence there had been, but the excuse was a bit late in coming, and few could doubt that the real basis for this action was Urban's determination to stay in Rome and the annoying persistence with which he sought to curtail the power and influence of the cardinals, individually and collectively. The cardinals followed up their manifesto with a formal deposition of Urban VI and the election of a successor (September 20).

In choosing Robert of Geneva they selected a man who was everything that Urban was not. To begin with, the new Pope, who called himself Clement VII, was a relative of the King of France, an astute and able politician, something of a warrior, and responsive to the charms of wine, women, and song. He was, of course, not only prepared, but willing, to go to Avignon. As a result of the cardinals' action Europe was bewildered and dismayed, from 1378 to 1409, by the conflicting claims of two popes, and from 1409 to 1417, of three.

Urban VI ignored the action of his rebellious cardinals, created others to take their places, and conducted himself as the legitimate Head of the Church until his death in 1389. His College of Cardinals continued the schism by electing as his successor Boniface IX. Boniface was well meaning, mild of disposition, possessed of con-

The Roman line

siderable tact, and well versed in the mysterious art of finance. Though he had been denied anything more than an elementary education, he showed his appreciation of learning by the establishment of two universities (Ferrara and Fermo) and the confirmation of one (Erfurt). His pontificate (1389-1404) passed without incident as did that of his learned, pious, but short-lived successor, Innocent VII (1404-1406). Innocent was followed by Gregory XII (1406-1415), an octogenarian noted for his personal piety and praised for his expressed desire to bring the ruinous schism to an end.

While these four popes were maintaining the validity of the election of Urban VI, the opposition party continued to hold out at Avignon. Clement VII enjoyed his unexpected honor for sixteen years (1378-1394). He attempted to demonstrate his claim to be the legitimate successor of Peter by leading in person a military invasion of Italy, and he revealed his French interests by planning the creation of an Italian State for the benefit of the Duke of Anjou. At his death in 1394 the "Avignon line" was represented by Benedict XIII, who took a preëlection oath to negotiate at once with his rival in Rome with the object of healing the schism and even to abdicate if other methods failed. But to Benedict promise and performance were only alike in having five similar letters.

That the schism came to an end at all was due to the universal protest which arose throughout Europe and came from the courts of rulers, the lecture halls of the universities, the studies and cells of sincere students and monks. The rival pontiffs did surprisingly little beyond expressing a desire to see restored the seamless garment of the Church. Once, and once only, something like definite action was taken: Benedict XIII and Gregory XII agreed to meet at Savona (1407), but Gregory found more than a score of ingenious but quite unconvincing reasons for not proceeding farther than Lucca. The cardinals were equally ineffective and insincere until, in 1408, a voluntary committee drawn from both allegiances took the momentous step of calling a General Council to attempt a solution where they and the popes had failed.

Since the outbreak of the schism in 1378, Europe had been divided in its allegiance, the choice of individual countries being as often determined by politics as by sincere conviction. Italy naturally favored the Roman line, France their rivals at Avignon. With France were joined her political allies, Spain and Scotland. England, hostile to France and Scotland, supported Rome as did Ger-

The Avignon line

Protests against the schism

by nations

many, Bohemia, and Poland. But as time went on every European court recognized the imperative need of terminating a frankly desperate situation. Even France found it expedient to reconsider her earlier enthusiasm for Avignon, since by the adherence of England, Germany, and Italy to Rome, the bulk of the burden of maintaining the expensive court at Avignon fell upon her. But French efforts to heal the schism were paralyzed by the incompetence of Charles VI and the rivalry of Burgundy and Orléans. Henry IV of England was willing but unable to undertake any effective measures, and his predicament was shared by the rulers on the Continent. The work of restitution was, therefore, left to individuals, and they did not fail.

The universities of the Middle Ages occupied a position somewhat similar to that filled by the Press of today, and their views on current topics were widely accepted as authoritative. Closely connected with the Church, they could neither regard the schism with indifference nor follow blindly the expressed adherence of their rulers. From the very outbreak of the schism, university opinion throughout Europe was denunciatory of the existent situation and university influence was exerted in forcing a settlement. No university did more to arouse Europe to a recognition of the disgrace of the schism and the necessity of terminating it than the University of Paris under its able leaders, John Gerson and Peter d'Ailly. As early as 1381 the university had experienced the embarrassments of the schism, for the student body, made up as it was of men from every nation, was hopelessly divided in its obedience to the rival popes, Urban VI and Clement VII. Seeing no immediate prospect of a concord between the popes, the university urged Charles V to summon a General Council which should have power to restore unity to the Church by whatever means seemed most suitable. This plea had no immediate result, but the continued disagreement among the students kept alive the *idea* of a council. To give credit where credit is due, the suggestion of a General Council did not originate within the University of Paris, for it had been presented the previous year by Conrad of Gelnhausen, Rector of the University of Heidelberg. In 1394 Paris once more urged an immediate settlement of the schism, and on the basis of a memorial drawn up by Peter d'Ailly and Nicholas of Clemenges suggested three courses of action. If possible, the two popes should be persuaded to abdicate, and a reconstructed College of Cardinals should then elect a successor;

and universities

or a commission should be appointed to arbitrate the whole matter; or the question should be submitted to a General Council. For another fourteen years the university continued to agitate for a council and was finally rewarded when the volunteer cardinals issued their summons to Pisa.

The call for a General Council was sent out under circumstances truly strange. As a result of the defection of the cardinals who were now taking things into their own hands, the confusion of two popes was confounded by the existence of two popes without a College of Cardinals, and two colleges of cardinals without a Pope. The Council opened its sessions on March 25, 1409, and was as numerous and as august an assembly as ever the Western Church had seen. In addition to twenty-two cardinals, the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, there were present twelve archbishops; eighty bishops in person, and over a hundred by proxy; eighty-seven abbots; the generals of the Military Orders; deputies from French, English, Italian, Polish, Austrian, and Bohemian universities; nearly half a thousand doctors in theology; and ambassadors from the kings of England, France, Bohemia, Sicily, and Poland.

After the essential preliminaries had been disposed of, the Council proceeded to declare itself the legitimate representative of the Catholic Church, the highest authority on earth, and as such, possessing cognizance of the matter before it. An accusation against Benedict XIII and Gregory XII, charging them with being schismatical, heretics, perjurors, and obstinate abettors of the present schism, was publicly read and concluded with a formal sentence of deposition (June 5). Ten days later the two colleges of cardinals, formally declared united into one, elected Peter of Candia, the Franciscan Archbishop of Milan, who took the name of Alexander V. The Council then considered the matter of general Church reform, but coming to no agreement it was dissolved on August 7.

The Council of Pisa must bear the charge of being revolutionary. Tradition, practice, and canon law alike held that general councils could be summoned only by the Pope; that the Pope should preside over all such assemblies; and that his approval of all acts was essential to their validity. But revolutionary procedures are often necessary and sometimes salutary, and the champions of the Council of Pisa may well be thanked for remembering that "the letter killeth" and that where the spirit is there is liberty. Faced with the facts

*The Council of
Pisa (1409)*

*The deposition
of Benedict
and Gregory*

Significance

of two popes, obstinately refusing to compromise or arbitrate, and of a Europe hopelessly divided, it was the part of wisdom to make the distress of Western Christendom outweigh the merits of a strict adherence to canon law.

The Council was not a complete success, for it had acted hastily and had assumed a general approval of its work. To be sure, the vast majority of Christians recognized Alexander V as the one, true head of the Church, but neither Benedict XIII nor Gregory XII would recognize the action taken at Pisa; both retained the obedience of scattered groups, so that instead of two popes there were three; the "infamous duality" became a "cursed trinity" and as such remained for another five years. Alexander V survived his election only ten months, busying himself for the most part with the heresies of Wyclif and Hus, both of which he condemned. The cardinals filled the vacancy by the election of Baldassare Cotta (John XXIII), whose early career as a soldier of fortune and pirate and whose unenviable reputation as a debaucher of women rendered the choice a "grotesque and blasphemous incongruity."

The "cursed trinity"

The continued existence of three popes seemed to nullify the work of Pisa, and men grew impatient for the General Council which Alexander V had promised to summon within three years. John XXIII had no desire to share his newly acquired power with the leading ecclesiastics of Europe, and attempted to satisfy the reform group, without injury to himself, by "packing" a council which he opened at Rome on February 10, 1413. No one took this council very seriously, the demand for a genuinely representative assembly continued, and John XXIII, hard pressed by his political enemy, Ladislaus of Naples, turned for help to the Emperor Sigismund of Germany. Sigismund, an earnest advocate of reform, insisted upon the holding of a council and, with the grudging approval of the Pope, issued a summons to the princes and prelates of Europe to attend a Universal Council which should meet on November 1, 1414.

The "packed" Council of 1413

Sigismund won a second triumph in securing Constance, an imperial city, as the place of meeting. The Emperor did not reach the Council until Christmas Day, by which time the bulk of the delegates had also arrived. The city was filled to overflowing, what with reformers and the usual army of merchants, musicians, actors, harlots, knaves, and pickpockets, attracted by curiosity or the hope of gain. "The number of visitors in the little walled city of about

The Council of Constance (1414-1418)

eight thousand varied from fifty to one hundred thousand and was constantly fluctuating.”¹

The Council of Constance was more embracing in scope and of far greater significance than the earlier assembly at Pisa. Not only was it faced with the same problem of schism, but the leading delegates were anxious to undertake a radical reform of outstanding abuses. The “Babylonian Captivity” and the “Great Schism” had given Europe plenty to think about for over a century, and by 1414 a reform spirit was awake, eager and insistent. Criticism once under way could not be kept within strict bounds, and such prohibited subjects as papal claims of supreme spiritual authority, the value of the Sacramental System, the validity of various rites and practices, the divine character of the priesthood were as freely discussed as the less dangerous ones of financial abuses, moral degeneration, and spiritual apathy. As a result, the Council had three extremely important matters to consider: schism, reform, and the danger of heresy.

Schism and heresy were the first objects of attention, although to give validity to its actions the Council upheld the legality of the imperial summons by appealing to the precedents of Constantine, Charlemagne, and Henry III, and decreed that the Council “having been lawfully assembled in the name of the Holy Spirit, and forming an ecumenical council of the whole Church militant, hath received its authority immediately from our Lord Jesus Christ; a power which every person whatsoever, of whatever state or dignity he may be, even the pope himself, must obey in all matters relating to the faith, the extirpation of schism, and the reformation of the Church in its head and in its members.” A tendency to support the claims of John XXIII weakened rapidly, as the delegates from beyond the Alps flocked into Constance, and gave way to the suggestion of a triple abdication. This remedy would have required nothing short of a miracle to render it effective, so the Council turned to the sterner course of deposing John XXIII on the grounds of gross immorality, simony, heresy, and some forty-seven other charges. John first tried to gain time by negotiation and then sought to paralyze the work of the Council by “bolting.” Clad in a postilion’s dress he took advantage of a diversion provided by a tournament to escape to the neighboring castle of Schaffhausen. The Council was dismayed but not defeated.

¹ Flick, A. C., *The Decline of the Medieval Church*, II, p. 41 and *passim*.

John Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, delivered a long and learned sermon demonstrating that in times of need the authority of an ecumenical council is greater than that of the Pope. On May 29, 1415, John XXIII was formally declared removed from office, and delegates were sent to urge the resignations of Gregory XII and Benedict XIII. On July 4, 1415, Gregory submitted to the pleas of the delegates, but Benedict, who had removed to Pensacola, obstinately rejected the request of the Council and the personal supplication of the Emperor Sigismund. He was deposed on July 26, 1417. On November 11, 1417, three years after the formal opening of the Council, the Cardinal Odo Colonna was elected as Martin V. The Great Western Schism was at an end, and "men could scarcely speak for joy." Out of the evil had come forth good. Out of the terrible situation which had denied assured salvation to everyone (since each pope had excommunicated the adherents of his rivals) sprang a vigorous, healthy demand for reform, and out of it was born the theory of conciliar supremacy as set forth by Conrad of Gelnhausen, by D'Ailly in his *Letter of the Devil of Leviathan*, by Gerson's *On Ecclesiastical Unity*, and by Durand of Mende's *On General Councils and the Reformation of Church Abuses*. But out of it also arose the mystical sects of the lower Rhine region, the heresies of Wyclif and Hus, and the extravagances of enthusiastic lay orders.

The Council had been busy with the problem of heresy at the same time that it was engaged in healing the schism. Partly because of Sigismund's double interest in Bohemia and Constance, and partly because of its real danger, the term "heresy," so far as the Council was concerned, became synonymous with the teachings of the Oxford scholar Wyclif as presented by the Bohemian Hus. John Hus (of Husinec) was not the founder of a new heretical movement, for he derived his ideas from Wyclif and his enthusiasm from the success of Wyclif's followers, the *Lollards*. John Wyclif (1324-1384) has been called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," a title justifiable at least on the grounds that the movement started by him continued to the days of Luther and Calvin. His position, as taken in his greater works (*Truth of Scripture*, *The Trialogue*, *The Divine Regimen*), can be briefly summarized. Under the stress of persecution and the spectacle of that "sink of Hell," Avignon, he became a decided radical. He denounced the teachings of the Church, particularly on the matter of transubstantiation, as inconsistent with

The end of the schism

Heresy

John Hus

John Wyclif

Scripture and therefore untenable. He favored the confiscation of the worldly property of the Church and urged a return to the simplicity of the apostolic age. He taught that in matters of personal conduct men should rather follow the dictates of conscience than the decrees of human authority. He attacked current abuses, doubted the efficacy of pilgrimages and indulgences, denied the validity of sacraments performed by sinful priests, and protested that belief in the supremacy of the Roman Church was not essential for salvation. For Wyclif the Church was the "body of the elect." His influence spread largely because of his English translation of the Bible, his creation of a body of trained itinerant preachers (*Lollards*), and the close connection between Oxford and Prague since the marriage of Richard II to Anne of Bohemia.

Hus in Bohemia

Hus (1369-1415) found Bohemia fairly well prepared for the reception of Wycliffite doctrines. Not only had Waldensian heretics found refuge there for centuries, but more recently a series of earnest reformers had been active in calling attention to ecclesiastical abuses and the growing immorality of monks and clerics. Hus was very active in spreading the teachings of Wyclif, although he never equaled the Englishman's radicalism. He increased both his popularity and effectiveness by allying himself whole-heartedly with the anti-German Bohemian party. This combination of reform and nationalism made him at once a local hero to the Bohemians, a dangerous firebrand to the orthodox clergy, and a potential rebel to Sigismund.

His trial and death

On November 3, 1414, Hus, in possession of a safe-conduct furnished him by the Emperor, arrived at Constance to answer charges of irregularities in his preachings. Three weeks later, and before a formal trial, the safe-conduct was ignored, and Hus was sent to a Dominican monastery and confined in a foul dungeon unpleasantly close to a sewer. Sigismund entered a feeble protest but gave way when the cardinals threatened to dissolve the Council altogether and so leave the great questions of schism and reform unsettled. For another seven months the Council went through the formalities of a trial, although the result was a foregone conclusion unless Hus should recant. On July 6, after repeated opportunities to recant had been rejected, Hus was formally condemned to death and burned at the stake in a meadow near the river. Nearly a year later Jerome of Prague, a fellow worker with Hus, suffered the same fate and on the same spot.

The Council had succeeded in condemning the teachings of Wyclif, in burning Hus and Jerome, but the English movement lived on, and the martyrdom of the two Bohemians led to an uprising in Bohemia which resulted in the first successful resistance to the mighty claims of Rome. And throughout Europe strange sects and stranger heresies betrayed the existence of men unconvinced by the teachings of the Church, who were keeping jealous guard of that inestimable treasure, the right of private judgment and conscience.

In the matter of reform the Council was far less successful than in the business of heresy and schism. On very few points could any general agreement be reached. Thoroughgoing reform met resistance from vested interests, and individual selfishness outweighed the wider considerations of general welfare. This was most unfortunate, for in 1414 the whole Council had seemed exceptionally eager to purge the Church of its most flagrant faults. Three reform commissions were appointed during the three and a half years that the Council met in its forty-three sessions, but the net result of their labors and suggestions can be readily summarized. The Council provided for the periodic meetings of future councils, prohibited the reservation of vacant benefices by the Pope, condemned simony, and restricted the imposition of tithes to cases of genuine necessity.

Where the Council failed, lay governments succeeded. Germany entered into a concordat with Martin V (May 2, 1418) by which the collection of *annates*, the circumstances under which ecclesiastical cases might be appealed to Rome, and the amounts to be paid to the papal *Curia* were strictly regulated. France adopted the same policy and signed a virtually identical treaty. England, relying on its statutes of Provisors and *Præmunire*, contented itself with limiting the number of papal indulgences and dispensations. The Council was dissolved April 22, 1418.

The Council of Constance, however, has a significance and an interest probably quite unsuspected by the attending delegates and certainly ignored by Vrie, the contemporary historian of the assembly. To begin with the Council was dominated by the university element: "Never before — and perhaps never since — was academic authority so high."² Of more importance is the fact that Constance provided a most "remarkable experiment of representative government" and was "the first expression of the common interests of the new family of European states." At the suggestion of Robert

Reform

National Concordats

The importance of the Council of Constance

² Thompson, J. W., *The Middle Ages*, p. 968.

Hallam, the delegates, following the system in vogue at the leading universities, divided themselves into five "nations." Each nation selected a varying number of deputies, who then debated the items of business presented to the Council and determined their course of action. Subsequently, "a congregation of the nations was held and each nation cast its vote on the question under consideration. The action of the congregation of nations was then presented to the general council for formal ratification." As a result many interests not strictly ecclesiastical (e.g., those of the universities, the national states, and the laity), which would have been excluded from any previous council except the very earliest ones, were given representation and an opportunity to urge — and not rarely to compel — the acceptance of their opinions.

The Council of Siena-Pavia (1423)

Five years after the little town of Constance had returned to its normal state of quiet, Martin V, in accordance with the decree (*Frequens*) of the delegates, summoned another Council at Pavia (1423). The sudden appearance of a plague compelled the Pope to remove it to Siena. Due to the renewal of the Hundred Years' War, the open rebellion of the Hussites in Bohemia, and the pre-occupation of the Spaniards with the Moors, the Council was sparsely attended and quite incapable of putting additional checks upon the Pope or of furthering the work of reform. As a result, the Council of Siena was dissolved on March 7, 1424, and the reform party in the Church had to be content with vague papal promises of remedial measures, until the growing seriousness of the Hussite heresy compelled the calling of the Council of Basle for March 7, 1431.

The Hussite wars

The execution of Hus and Jerome by the Council of Constance called forth a violent protest from the outraged Bohemians, and even bibulous King Wenzel had the opportunity of playing the incongruous rôle of a champion of ethical conduct, for he bitterly attacked Sigismund's perfidious violation of the safe-conduct. Indeed, it was largely due to Wenzel's admitted interest in Bohemian affairs and his disinclination to persecute the adherents of the Hussite doctrines that any serious uprising was avoided. But Wenzel died in 1419, and Sigismund, the " betrayer " of Hus and the " representative of all that was foreign and anti-Bohemian," possessed the strongest claim to the vacant throne. This alone was enough to provoke Bohemian opposition, were it not also known that the Emperor was thoroughly committed to the cause of the Roman

Church, and as such was the avowed enemy of all that savored of heresy. In 1420 Sigismund proceeded to occupy the kingdom he regarded as his own, backed by Martin V, who called upon all Christians to crush the Hussite heresy, and encouraged by a rift within the reforming groups.

An inability to agree upon details has characterized the numerous bodies which have broken away from the traditional Church and the Hussites proved no exception. By 1420 two distinct parties had appeared; a conservative group known as the Calixtines, or Ultraquists (from its insistence upon the right of the laity to receive the Blood as well as the Body of Christ at the time of communion), advocating a gradual reform and the independent treatment of religious and political problems; and a more radical section, the Taborites, which, while also demanding communion in both kinds, had inserted into their religious program a number of political principles which in part betrayed democratic, and what might now be called socialistic, tendencies.

The Calixtines had published an official manifesto, known as the "Four Articles of Prague," which stated the conditions upon which they would remain within the Church. The articles urged the administering of the communion in both kinds to all faithful laymen; the faithful and free preaching of the Scriptures by priests and such deacons as should be deemed suitable; the correction and punishment of sin by the proper authorities; and the denial of temporal authority to the clergy.

The hostile advance of Sigismund led the Hussites to forget their minor differences, and to present a united front against the alien invader. Under the admirable leadership of their one-eyed general, John Ziska, the Bohemians repulsed three successive "crusades." The credit for this amazing success, however, must be divided between the strategy and artillery of Ziska and the astounding inefficiency and apathy of the German levies. From 1422 to 1427 the Emperor left Bohemia alone; the old party differences revived, and Ziska succumbed to the plague, though this disaster was offset by the appearance of the equally able, and totally blind, Procopius. In 1427 a "crusading" rabble of 200,000 men fled at the dreaded name of Procopius. Four years later a last attempt ended in complete defeat at the battle of Taas. The failure of the imperial arms to eradicate the Hussite heresy left the only hope of effecting a solution of this desperate problem in the Council of Basle, sum-

*Calixtines and
Taborites*

*The "Four
Articles of
Prague"*

John Ziska

Procopius

*The battle of
Taas (1431)*

moned by Pope Martin V but only opened in the pontificate of Eugenius IV.

The Council of Basle had been called with the objects of extirpating heresy, settling the differences which for centuries had separated the Eastern and Western Churches, and of bringing about a complete reform of the Church "in its head and in its members." On the day appointed for the opening (March 7, 1431) only one delegate had appeared, and nearly a quarter of a year slipped by before sufficient numbers had arrived to warrant a formal opening. Once under way the Council maintained an interrupted existence for eighteen years.

Eugenius IV, although he had summoned the Council in accordance with the decree *Frequens*, passed at Constance, struggled desperately to protect the papacy from the realization of the conciliar theory, and for a long time with very little success. The Council was not to be denied. One of its most efficient and influential members, Nicholas of Cues, had already, in an important political treatise *On Catholic Concord*, developed a theory of the true relation between Pope and Council which, in fact, reduced the Pope to a conciliar agent — a sort of ecclesiastical Prime Minister — holding office only so long and on such conditions as the Church, acting through a General Council, should decree. To the threats and bulls of dissolution of Eugenius, the Council replied with sentences of suspension and deposition, and even took the desperate risk of reviving the schism by the creation of an antipope (Felix V).

To handle the various items of proposed business, the Council was divided into four "deputations," each with equal national representation, to discuss the four matters of the restoration of peace within the Church, Faith and doctrine, Church reform, and general business. In other words, the Council of Basle was experimenting with the modern system of government by committees. The Hussite heresy merited first consideration, and in 1432 a Bohemian delegation, including Procopius — as dangerous in theological debate as in the field — came to Basle. For months the champions of both parties exhausted themselves and their opponents in outrageously long displays of oratory, which were always sincere and sometimes witty.

In the end the Roman Church made its first compromise with a dissident sect. A treaty, known as the *Compacta* and signed at Prague, ended the long struggle (1433). By this agreement the Roman Church permitted the Hussites to receive communion in

both kinds and granted liberty of preaching to such priests as had been canonically ordained and remained obedient to their bishops. For their part the Bohemians agreed that the clergy should be punished "according to the law of God and the ordinances of the Fathers" and confirmed the right of churchmen to hold property.

The Bohemians had gained a very substantial victory, but the Taborites felt that their interests had been betrayed, or at least ignored. The suspended feud broke out once more, and Bohemia was plunged into civil war. From this conflict, which reached its climax in the battle of Lipan, the Calixtines emerged triumphant. Now that the religious quarrel had ended, the Calixtines, ever consistent in keeping religious and political questions apart, felt it possible to negotiate with Sigismund on the restoration of the monarchy. Upon the Emperor's agreement to grant a complete amnesty and to appoint only Utraquists to public office, he was acknowledged King of Bohemia. So far as Europe was concerned the Bohemian ghost was laid, until the repudiation of the *Compacta* in 1618 precipitated the Thirty Years' War.

The Council was less successful in its efforts to heal the breach between the Churches of the East and West. Here, too, was a matter of grave concern, for in addition to doctrinal differences there was the danger of the extinction of the Christian Empire of the East at the hands of the Turks. The Eastern Emperor, John Palæologus, had appealed frantically for Western aid, and both the Council and Eugenius IV dared to hope that the Turkish menace would force the Greek Church into union with Rome as the price of support. The Pope suggested the removal of the Council to Florence for the convenience of the Greeks, but the reformers would have none of it. The differences between Pope and Council widened into open conflict. Eugenius went ahead with his plans, met the Greek delegates at Florence, and obtained from them a reluctant adherence to the Roman doctrines on such vital matters as the Procession of the Holy Ghost, Purgatory, the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and the position of the Bishop of Rome as Head of the Church (1439).

The bitterness of the quarrel between Eugenius and the Council paralyzed all efforts for effective control. In the heat of the controversy, Eugenius had dissolved the Council and had been deposed in return. In his stead the Council had elected the Count of Savoy, a layman and the sire of many sons, who took the singularly in-

*The attempts
to reconcile
the Churches
of the East
and West*

Felix V

felicitous title of Felix V. Felix was a man of very moderate means, and the Council was obliged to find a revenue for him by the humiliating expedient of reviving the abuse of *annates*, already condemned by its own decree. The election of the antipope evoked widespread disapproval, shattered the hopes of those who had looked to the Council for constructive reform, and practically destroyed whatever faith in the conciliar theory had still survived. The Council did continue for another nine years, but they were years of increasing inefficiency, marked by general bad feeling and replete with bickerings and much ado about nothing. Felix V abdicated his meaningless office in 1443, gratefully accepted a cardinal's hat from his late rival, and died with the dubious distinction of being the last antipope. By 1448 the delegates at Basle had dwindled to a handful, a pitiful group who adjourned to Lausanne in 1449 and meekly dissolved themselves at the orders of the Emperor.

With the dissolution of the Council of Basle the conciliar period comes to an end. In the long struggle between the papacy and the councils the papacy had emerged triumphant. But the councils had not been entirely without effect, even though some of the results were unsuspected and unwelcome. To begin with, the papacy was once more unified and in a relatively stronger position, now that its most serious enemy, the conciliar theory, lay discredited and abandoned. The Hussite heresy had been ended, though by compromise. More important was the fact that for half a century all Europe had been spectators at a trial in which the Church and the papacy played the strange part of the defendants. The councils had permitted amazing liberties of speech, and the criticisms of fiery reformers were relayed to every section of the West and stimulated discussion and, consequently, consideration among nameless thousands everywhere. Suggestion begat suggestion, and no collapse of the conciliar system could end the earnest desire for reform; a desire which was soon to find in the printing press a far more effective medium of expression than the utterances, however earnest, of conciliar orators. Individual nations profited somewhat from the failure of Basle as they had from the failure of Constance. In 1438, Charles VII of France issued the *Pragmatic Sanction* of Bourges, which abolished the papal collection of *annates*, and practically put an end to papal appointments within the limits of his kingdom. Germany followed suit in the *Pragmatic Sanction* of Mainz (1439) and the *Fürsten Konkordat* of 1448. Most serious of all was the fact that

"The Church lost its last great opportunity to retain and preserve the unity of Christendom under one organization; to purify the Church so thoroughly that it could perform its useful mission in the world; to modify its teachings and doctrines as well as its constitution to meet the new needs of a new civilization that was rapidly creeping over Europe; and to summon to its service for efficient leadership men of brains, pure hearts, a true spiritual vision, high Christian ideals, a lofty conception of the real mission of the Church to serve and save men, . . ."³

This failure cleared the way for the success of the vigorous dogmatism of Luther and the remorseless logic of Calvin.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TWILIGHT OF ITALY

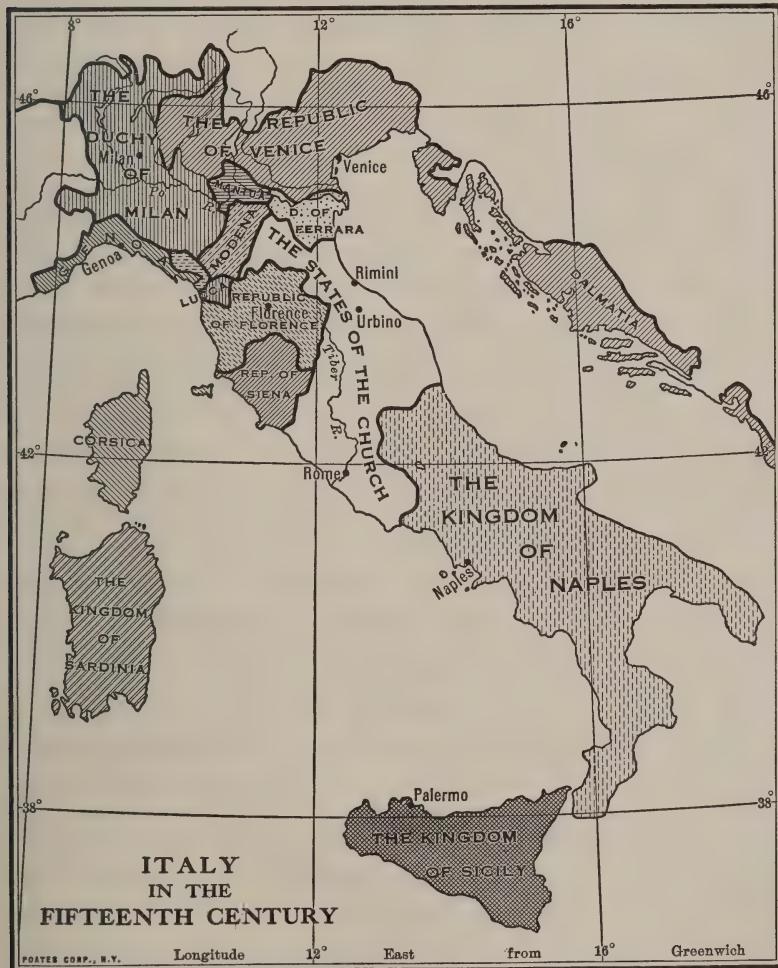
*Italy at the
end of the
thirteenth
century*

THE death of Manfred on the field of Grandella (1266), the defeat of Conradien at Tagliacozzo (1268), and his public execution in the market-square at Naples ended the long struggle of the Hohenstaufens to unify and control the Italian peninsula. The imperial interregnum and the Habsburg policy of settling German affairs in preference to pursuing imperial phantoms left Italy pretty much to itself. And left to itself, Italy showed a decided tendency to arrive at anarchy through the not unusual process of too many governments and too many governors.

Unification had not progressed very far anywhere in Europe by the middle of the thirteenth century; it had so far been only an aspiration in Italy; it was soon to be only the vision of the political enthusiast or the dream of the poet. North Italy had been shattered into a score of political fragments under the shock of two centuries of warfare between Empire and Papacy. The Lombard towns had taken advantage of the struggle to shake off their dependence upon the local lords, lay and cleric, by siding with Pope or Emperor as best suited their peculiar situation. Occasionally, the towns had vaguely recognized the existence of common interests or the general welfare and had organized themselves into leagues to resist the menace of a Hohenstaufen domination. But such leagues were occasional and disintegrated as soon as the motive which called them into being seemed removed. Each city lived intensely for itself, envious of every increase in wealth or extension of territory made by its neighbors. Even within the city walls there was little unity; old party names, such as Guelf and Ghibelline, which had designated the supporters of Pope or Emperor, were still retained to indicate divergent principles of local politics.

Italy provided a veritable epitome of political experimentation. From the Straits of Messina to the foothills of the Alps a dozen types of government ran down (or up) the scale from absolute monarchy through theocracy to republican democracy. All, furthermore, were in a state of constant evolution or dissolution. Political

ferment was equaled by intellectual, economic, and artistic activity, for life was being lived to the full, and the subsequent appearance of unsurpassed works of art and a lasting literature more than compensated for the unattained political unity.



For the moment, Italy of the thirteenth century may be divided, as ancient Gaul, into three parts. In the north were the leading representatives of the municipal idea — Genoa, Florence, Milan, and Venice. Stretching diagonally across the center of the peninsula lay the papal "States," including Peter's Patrimony, the duchy of

The triple division

Spoletō, the march of Ancona, numerous quasi-independent towns (Bologna, Urbino, Rimini), and practically independent signorial domains; while to the south lay the extensive but compact kingdom of Naples and Sicily.

It is difficult to establish any general movements throughout the two centuries and a half which separate the Italian invasion of Charles of Anjou from the Italian journey of Charles VIII, but there is a certain convenience in an artificial, if not strictly accurate, grouping of events. From the death of Frederick II to the imperial coronation of Lewis of Bavaria (1250-1328), three attempts at a unification of Italy were made—by the papacy, by the Empire, and by the kingdom of Naples. The period from 1328 to the middle of the fifteenth century may be roughly characterized as a century of concentration; an age in which the great cities of the North are acquiring somewhat of stability, though in the process communal government is giving way to the rule of powerful families; it is the Age of the Republics, the first Age of the Despots, but it is also the Age of Petrarch and Boccaccio. The last half of the fifteenth century sees the principal states with a definite form of government, relatively certain boundaries, and (for the first time in centuries) with something of a consistent policy, not only in local matters, but in the concerns of Italy as a whole.

Charles of Anjou (and Provence) had come to Italy at the invitation of Urban IV who, as feudal suzerain of the kingdom of Sicily under the will of Henry VI, had offered him the southern realm. Urban had died before the French noble had arrived, but his successor, Clement IV—incidentally a Provençal—continued the Angevin alliance with enthusiasm. Charles was elected senator of the Romans and was appointed by Clement as imperial vicar of Tuscany on the ground that the Empire was then vacant. The happy concord between the Pope and the new king of the Sicilies could not last. Charles of Anjou possessed his full share of Valois ambition and was quite as likely to become an embarrassment to papal policy as any Hohenstaufen. The Angevin undoubtedly planned to bring the peninsula under Neapolitan control, for his dreams of power were of heroic mold. He had acquired Hohenstaufen policies along with Hohenstaufen territories; he thought of a conquest of Africa, a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and possibly—because his wife was the heiress of Baldwin II—of an attack upon Constantinople, now restored to the Greeks.

Tendencies

*The Angevins
in Sicily*

Unpopular

The papacy had grown uneasy by the time Gregory X (1271-1276) occupied the chair of Peter, and this clear-headed member of the Visconti family undertook to weaken the power of an ally who threatened to become a master. The shortness of his pontificate prevented any marked progress, but his successor, Nicholas III (1277-1280), continued his policy and, profiting by a general reaction against French interference in the north of Italy, succeeded in getting Charles to resign his offices of senator and imperial vicar.

The two popes and the north Italians were not the only enemies of the Angevin rule. Within the boundaries of the Neapolitan kingdom there was widespread dissatisfaction. Charles of Anjou was an able but stern ruler, and the severity of his government brought forth the usual complaints. Added to this were the facts that Charles was very French, that he showed an irritating preference for Frenchmen in the bestowal of lucrative or influential positions, and that he transplanted the capital from Palermo to Naples. The islanders felt aggrieved and remembered that their respected King Manfred had left a daughter, who was now the royal spouse of Peter III of Aragon. To him the Sicilians offered their island, and to their pleas John of Procida added the promise of men and money from the Greek Emperor, Michael Palaeologus, who hoped by a diversion in Sicily to keep Charles from the Bosphorus.

Discontent

On March 31, 1282, the citizens of Palermo broke out in open rebellion and massacred such luckless Frenchmen as they could find. The movement swept rapidly throughout the island, the towns eliminated the French garrisons, appealed to the anti-French nobility for assistance, and proclaimed Peter III as king. In vain Charles of Anjou tried to recover his lost island. Peter was firmly installed as king, and the families of Anjou and Aragon were launched on a struggle that was to last for two centuries. Charles and Peter died in the year 1285, but the rivalry did not end, and the Peace of Caltobellotta (1302), by which the Angevins recognized the Aragon as King of Sicily, proved only an interlude.

The "Sicilian Vespers"

The papacy had benefited indirectly by the events which had divided the southern kingdom into two, and Boniface VIII was encouraged to extend the temporal authority of Rome, and in so doing called forth Dante's complaint that

“ The Sword is joined unto the Crozier, and the two
Must of necessity go ill together.”

Boniface VIII

Boniface was a man of great daring and unlimited ambition. To get complete control of Rome he strengthened his own family (the Gaetani) with lands of the Church and waged relentless war against the rival house of Colonna, a conflict which ended in the humiliation at Anagni. It was Boniface who issued the unfortunate invitation to Charles of Valois, brother of Philip IV, to act as (pro-papal) arbiter in the struggle between the Whites (Ghibelline-imperial) and the Blacks (Guelf-papal) in Florence and to drive the Aragonese from Sicily. Charles failed in the south, but his interference in Florence handed the city over to the Blacks and procured the exile of the Whites which started Dante on the long exile that produced the *Divine Comedy* and the treatise *On Monarchy*. Yet when Boniface died a prisoner in Rome the papacy seemed more firmly established than for half a century, Rome was more prosperous because of the two million pilgrims who had attended the Jubilee of 1300 and more beautiful since the labors of Giotto.

Then came the "Babylonian Captivity" and the eclipse of papal control. Coincident with the absence of the popes from Italy, two feeble attempts were made to restore the imperial authority. In 1310 Henry of Luxemburg crossed the Alps, led by a worthy ambition to become Emperor and to heal this deplorable party strife. Dante had high hopes of an Italy rejuvenated under a nonpartisan ruler. But ideals are often shattered by facts. Henry found that it was impossible for him to remain aloof from party differences, though in the first few weeks Guelf and Ghibelline made a show of burying the past. The Ghibellines hoped much of Henry; the Guelfs could not overcome a sense of distrust.

All too quickly Henry perceived that his only sure support was Ghibelline. In February, 1311, riots occurred in Milan as a result of heavy taxation and the arrogance of imperial agents, and peace was only restored when Henry gave his support to the Ghibelline leader, Matthew Visconti, against the Guelf chieftain, Guy Della Torre. Milan was typical of the general situation. Henry had to fight his way into Rome against Robert of Naples, grandson of Charles of Anjou, and was crowned in the Lateran, since the Neapolitans held St Peter's. The imperial crown added nothing to his power, for, as he died at Buonconvento he was preparing to attack the Guelf city of Florence. The effort of Lewis IV of Bavaria was, if anything, less successful. Where Henry VII had enjoyed the support of Clement V, Lewis invaded Italy in direct opposition to

*Italy
during the
"Babylonian
Captivity"*

*The Italian
journey of
Henry VII*

*Lewis the
Bavarian*

John XXII. Such aid as he found came from the Ghibelline nobles, the Roman populace angered at the papal absence, the reform wing of the Franciscan Order known as the Spirituals, and the political principles of Marsiglio of Padua. Lewis was crowned by the Roman mob, created an ineffectual antipope (Nicholas V), and returned to Germany. Thus unimposingly ended the imperial attempts to bring Italy under German control and the Golden Bull of Charles IV provided a suitable epitaph.

The story of Italy became more and more the story of her great cities, but as yet little more definite than general tendencies can be desctried. However, admitting a generous number of exceptions, there is evidence that the middle classes were consolidating their strength in an attempt to dislodge the civic nobility from its political monopoly and to acquire at least a share in municipal management; while the artisans were striving to shake off the restrictions placed upon them by the capitalistic merchants.

Municipal politics

The position of the nobles was based not on wealth, but on *matter*. The nobility lived within the city limits, but in palaces which served admirably as fortresses, surrounded by high walls and practically secure from successful assault by the poorly equipped merchants and their adherents. On the other hand, the nobles could not prevent family feuds and party differences in their own ranks. Each city had its Montagues, its Capulets. To match this weakness the people themselves were divided. There were the rich and the poor, the members of prominent guilds (*arti maggiori*), and more modest associations (*arti minori*), and a great host of men who belonged to no guild at all (*popolo minuto* or *ciompi*). Between the Haves and the Have-nots there was no common bond; between the Have-lots and the Have-littles there was mingled envy and contempt. As a result, civic spirit was a bewildering complication of varying aspirations, in which the larger problems of Guelf and Ghibelline merely embittered the local and more absorbing jealousies.

Some of the cities had attempted to secure the administration from the disruptions of party or family strife by the installation of a *podestà*, a sort of city manager, once appointed by the emperors but now often selected by the city. The *podestà*, a noble or adventurer, not infrequently from a distant city, was expected to avoid any party affiliations, name the city magistrates, administer the local finances, and, with the assistance of a gonfalonier of justice, a captain of the people, and a body of troops, enact and enforce legislation.

The podestà

The possibilities inherent in this office, or some similar independent creation, offered great temptation to local politicians. By the fifteenth century the system was widely established and provided the basis upon which was erected the power of the Visconti in Milan, of the Medici in Florence, the Scaliger in Verona, and the Gonzaga in Mantua.

Milan

One of the first of these so-called "Signories" to become a family heirloom was that of Milan, and the great Milanese State was in large part the creation of Matthew Visconti, who had won the favor of Henry VII. On his death in 1322 he handed his power to his son Galeazzo I (1322-1328) along with the coat of arms which bore the emblem of the serpent, so frankly expressive of Visconti policy. Milan had no natural frontiers, had followed no consistent political path, and was, in consequence, very definitely a created state, maintained by the vigor of its rulers, relying in turn upon the efficiency of a mercenary army and the salutary employment of terrorism.

Venice

Far off to the east of Milan and, as yet, hardly within the orbit of Italian politics, lay Venice, the Queen of the Adriatic. Here, the political situation had undergone a gradual transformation without the incidental excitement of class upheavals. Until late in the thirteenth century the sovereign power had rested in a Grand Council, or General Assembly, open to all the citizens, and its two committees, the *Quarantia* (a Supreme Court composed of forty members) and the *Pregadi* (or Senate). The executive authority was vested in the Doge, an advisory College of Experts, and a Little Council of Six. But in 1297 by the famous *Serrata*, or Closing of the Golden Book, the Grand Council was limited to some two hundred leading families; in 1307, a Star-Chamber Court, called the Council of Ten, was given extraordinary judicial powers which enabled it to exercise a nearly absolute control over the city.

Political wisdom

By these two measures Venice was governed by a tight little oligarchy, and the Doge had become a highly ornamental figure-head. The amazing absence of civic disturbance during this assimilation of power by the families of wealth is, perhaps, accounted for by the fact that the men in power never confused their own interests with those of Venice. The wealth which flowed into the city was generously expended for the benefit of Venetians in the establishment of city hospitals, public institutions, and the creation of a pension system; citizens were readily admitted to prominent positions in the civil service; while the absence of anything like a large

proletariat group automatically reduced the danger of social crises. Venice, of course, meant more than a mere city on a lagoon. Since the Fourth Crusade Venice had acquired an empire; islands off the Dalmatian coast, Negropont in Eubœa, and the island of Crete, together with trading quarters in scattered ports where commercial privileges had been won.

The great commercial rival of Venice was Genoa, but Genoa, despite her appearance of strength, had passed her days of greatness. The restoration of the Greek emperors to Constantinople (1261) had given Genoa the privileges which the Venetians had wrested from the Frankish crusaders. In addition to controlling the Bosphorus she enjoyed a monopoly of the Black Sea trade and possessed flourishing establishments in Smyrna, Cyprus, Chios, and Lesbos. In 1284 a brilliant naval victory off Meloria had crippled her nearest rival, Pisa, from whom she procured Corsica and Sardinia in 1299. Venice had been beaten at Curzola the year before. But all of these bright happenings were counterbalanced by unending internal feuds and rivalries, which ended in Genoese recognition of the suzerainty of the Visconti in 1353.

Florence was a very hive of activity, in politics as in those fields which were soon to give her unquestioned leadership in the Renaissance. Founded in the great days of the Roman Republic, Florentines had never quite forgotten her origin. She was a Guelf city as a result of the long struggle between popes and emperors for the Matildan inheritance, and for the reason that her nearest Tuscan rivals, Pisa and Siena, were Ghibelline. At the time of Frederick II's death political power in Florence was held by the nobles and the rich bourgeoisie; that is, the wealthy merchant class which monopolized the seven greater guilds or *arti maggiori*, and which was locally known as the *popolo grasso*. Below them, socially and politically, were the lower middle class, organized in the fourteen lesser guilds (*arti minori*), and the artisan and laboring class, not enrolled in any guild and collectively designated as *ciompi*. To the old institutions under the *podestà* had been counterpoised certain new creations.

The Florentine aristocracy had, by reason of its interest in its own private quarrels between Blacks and Whites, allowed its command of the local situation to weaken, and in 1293 lost it altogether. In that year, a concentrated effort of the fourteen guilds resulted in the overthrow of the nobility and the institution of a new scheme of government under the "Ordinances of Justice." By this decree, all

Genoa

*The battle of
Meloria
(1284)*

Florence

The guilds

*The
"Ordinances
of Justice"*

those not actively engaged in a trade and duly enrolled in a guild were excluded from political activities. The government was placed in the hands of six *priors*, selected by lot, holding office for two months, and advised by twelve "good men" (*buonuomini*), who were in office for half a year. The *podestà* and the captain of the people became mere executive agents of the *priors*, and were further weakened by the creation of a new official, the gonfalonier of justice. A number of new bodies (with very little power) were added—the Council of One Hundred; the Council of the Podesta; the Council of the Captain, and the *Parlamento* or General Assembly. To eliminate possible counter-attack from the nobility, the "Ordinances" required the nobles, or *grandi*, to reduce the height of the walls surrounding their residences and to keep off the streets at such times as the *popolo* disturbed the city with riots or demonstrations.

The Ordinances of Justice provided Florence with but an apparent democracy and a system of government which readily lent itself to abuse by party manipulation. There was an obvious weakness in an executive department which changed six times a year, while the practice of selecting the *priors* by drawing names out of a bag, offered temptations almost too great for human frailty. The spirit which had actuated the change and which characterized the new government was one of prejudice against the *grandi*, tempered with indifference to the political aspirations of the non-guildsman class. In a word, the Florentine democracy was in fact an oligarchy, administered by the wealthy merchant families in their own interests.

The bourgeois government of Florence had to guide its ship of State through very restless seas. The exclusion of the *grandi* above, and the *ciompi* below, from participation in municipal politics, created two classes ever ready to embarrass the administration in the hope of obtaining some control of the city management. There was always the danger that these two forces might form a temporary alliance. Again, the aggressive commercial policy of Florence involved her in difficulties with her neighbors and rivals, especially with Pisa, which blocked the way to the sea, and was a constant menace until the Genoese had smashed the Pisan fleet off Meloria. Popes continued to urge their claims to the Tuscan properties of Countess Matilda, emperors were always hostile to the proud Guelph city, and there was danger from the papal supporters, Charles of Anjou, Robert of Naples, or Charles of Valois.

Within the city there was no peace. Guelph and Ghibelline became

Black and White; family feuds went on without interruption and with such bitterness that the wholesale exile of the Whites (in 1301) seemed necessary to restore order. In 1305 the Donati family attempted to seize control of the city. Though the coup failed, democratic Florence sought to avoid future dangers of a similar nature by calling in a "protector," and thus unwittingly eased the way for the Medici. During this time of storm and stress, Florentine commerce and trade flourished, intellectual and artistic life expressed itself with a new vigor, full of promise; the splendid cathedral and the Palazzo Vecchio were built, and Dante speeded up the revolution of Italian literature by his use of the *dolce stil nuovo*.

*Whites versus
Blacks*

The second arbitrary period, which runs, roughly, to the middle of the fifteenth century, is in many respects a mere continuation of the first. But the "Babylonian Captivity" and the withdrawal of the German kings from active interference in Italian affairs left Italy very much to itself. As a result the story becomes, unavoidably, the story of Italian states, and preëminently of five: Milan, Venice, the "States" of the Church, Florence, and Naples. In all of Italy, with the possible exception of the Neapolitan kingdom, there can be discerned a steady concentration of power in the hands of a signory and the weakening of the commune and the republic.

In Milan the Visconti continued to rule by terror and the employment of mercenary troops. Indeed, a military following became the normal equipment of ambitious politicians throughout Italy. Bands of armed men, known as *condottieri*, and bearing a close resemblance to the *routiers* or brigands who so harried France during the lulls of the Hundred Years' War, organized under their own captains and took service for any purpose and under anyone able and willing to pay them. The Visconti won an ill-repute for cruelty and general debauchery. Yet their court became the center of refinement and good taste, willingly frequented by artists and men of learning.

*Milan and the
Visconti*

Milan entered upon a course of expansion under the able leadership of Gian-Galeazzo Visconti (1378-1402), who anticipated the inheritance of power by the murder of his uncle Bernabo. Gian-Galeazzo was able, through the use of bribery, murder, fraud, or honest warfare, to bring under the domination of Milan the greater part of Lombardy and the Tuscan cities of Pisa, Siena, and Lucca. In 1395 he obtained from the Emperor Wenzel the official title of Duke of Milan. His diplomatic agents were busy everywhere, and it was he who laid the foundations of the fateful alliance with

*Gian-
Galeazzo
(1378-1402)*

France. His wife, Isabelle, was the daughter of the good King John, and no small part of the ransom which John paid to England came from the coffers of Gian-Galeazzo. Of more importance was the marriage of his daughter, Valentina, to Louis of Orléans, for from this union came the later claims of the house of Orléans to the Milanese duchy. Gian-Galeazzo found time to play Mæcenas to the intellectuals of his day, and the gorgeous cathedral of Milan is an example of his non-political activity.

His son, John-Marie (1402-1412), was of meaner stuff, and it was well for the Visconti that an abler brother succeeded when John-Marie was assassinated in 1412. Philip-Marie (1412-1447) was an Italian Louis XI, sullen, suspicious, a "strange dingy creature" who shunned the social gayeties of the court. He was obliged to withstand a combined attack by Florence, Venice, and the papacy, for, worried by the territorial gains made by his father, the three had formed an ephemeral league against him. To meet this powerful coalition, Philip-Marie won the support of King Alphonse of Naples and took into his services Francesco Sforza, one of the most attractive of the *condottieri*, whom he bound the more closely to Visconti interests by marrying him to his natural daughter, Blanche-Marie.

When Philip-Marie died, in 1447, Milan thought to free itself from further despotic control and organized itself into the "Ambrosian Republic." Italian citizens had grown out of the habit of personal military service, and it was but natural for the new republic to hire Francesco Sforza as its *condottiere* leader. It was equally natural for Francesco to get himself proclaimed Duke of Milan, in 1450, and substitute the Sforza dynasty for the vanished Visconti.

Venice was playing a part on a larger stage than Milan, unhampered by any leading family which might precipitate a civic crisis. Intermittent war with the Genoese covered most of the fourteenth century; commercial energy sent Venetian merchants into Asia, led to treaties with the Sultan of Egypt, and resulted in the conquest of Corfu, Scutari, and Argos. But it is in this period that Venice began to look to the West as well as to the Orient. Partly as a defense measure, but more particularly to insure an adequate food supply, and to control the trade routes leading to Germany and the North, Venice broke away somewhat from her centuries-old maritime tradition and sought to become a land power as well. This decision was to bring her into direct contact with Italian cities and to involve her

Philip-Marie
(1412-1447)

The
"Ambrosian
Republic"

Venice

*Turns to the
mainland*

in long wars and the maintenance of costly armies. But for the time Fortune favored her; by 1338 she was in control of Padua and Treviso, by 1402 her supremacy was recognized by Verona and Vicenza, and by 1420 her boundaries were marked by the Alps and the rivers Adige and Isonzo. This territorial expansion which brought Venice to the very frontiers of the Milanese State was not marked by any apparent decline in commercial prosperity. Indeed, Venice seemed richer than ever. Her merchant marine numbered over three thousand ships, her silk trade was a source of tremendous profit, and Venetian traders formed the main link between the sugar kings of the East and the woolen merchants of Yorkshire.

Florence was moving steadily toward a despotism, but the pace was unhurried. The State was very prosperous, and the gradual absorption of weaker neighbors had brought its frontiers to the Apennine hills. The 90,000 citizens of Florence were growing wealthy as the woolen industry thrived and the banking houses flourished. Churches, palaces, and bridges of rare beauty were built with a profusion which testified to the general welfare of the city and the specific genius of its artists.

But the old causes of unrest remained. Artisans, peasants, and nobles continued to resent the political monopoly of the guilds. The Black Death, which swept over the city in 1348, brought great distress, and if it provided a setting for the inimitable *Decameron* of Boccaccio, it also fanned the flames of social hatred. In time the hostile groups found leaders; the richer families rallying round the banner of the Albizzi; the poorer classes looking for guidance to the Medici. In 1342 Walter de Brienne (who gloried in the title of Duke of Athens, but who in fact was a mere adventurer hired by the Florentine government to maintain the public peace) attempted a *coup d'état*, and with the support of the *condottieri* and an irresponsible mob succeeded in getting himself proclaimed lord of the city for life. Ten months later he was overthrown, and the *arti maggiori* seized the reins of government.

For thirty-five years (1343-1378) the rule of the greater guilds encountered no active opposition. But the Ordinances of Justice were slipping rapidly into the background. A political club, known as the *parte Guelfa*, wormed itself into the administration, provided most of the political leaders, and formed, as it were, an extralegal body. The arbitrary activities of this unofficial government aroused the antagonism of the official interests and split the rulingbour-

Florence
uneasy

The Albizzi
De Brienne

The parte
Guelfa

The ciompi

geoisie into two hostile camps. This quarrel provided an opportunity for the unenfranchised artisans and the disenfranchised nobles. In 1378 an uprising of the artisans, the *ciompi*, overthrew the government of the *arti maggiori* and destroyed the power of the *parte Guelfa*. The new government was hardly more democratic than the old, for it was heavily prejudiced in favor of the *arti minori* and, to a less extent, of the proletariat.

The next four years were topsy-turvy ones for Florence. The moderate leaders of the revolt had chosen Salvestro dei Medici as gonfalonier of justice. But Salvestro belonged to one of the lesser guilds, and the non-guildsmen were anxious for more control. A proletariat onslaught led to the substitution of a wool carder, Michael of Lande, for Salvestro and the annulment of the Ordinances of Justice. Three new guilds were created for the inclusion of *all* not qualified for membership in the existent twenty-one. By 1382 the "little people" had shown themselves so incapable of governing that the greater guilds could step once again into power.

The Albizzi in power

For another half century the rich merchants, grouped under the Albizzi family, controlled the city, but they had learned little from the recent events. No effort was made to placate their former enemies. On the other hand, they used their new power to obtain complete control of the woolen industry, and by their selfish imposition of high protective tariffs earned the hearty dislike of the ultimate consumer. Discontent looked once again to the Medici, and in 1433 Cosimo dei Medici succeeded in becoming the "First Citizen of Florence."

*Rome**Cola di Rienzo*

Rome, which did not have any pronounced economic interests, was spared much of the social unrest which was so characteristic of Florence, but the absence of the popes during the "Captivity" left the Eternal City a prey to faction. "The Papacy was to Rome as Diana to Ephesus," and the city presented the double picture of political chaos and material decay. In 1347 occurred the partly sincere, partly *opera bouffe*, interlude provided by Cola di Rienzo. Rienzo was a dreamy youth, a notary of sorts, who had read widely, if not thoroughly, the literature of republican Rome, and eagerly, if not pertinently, current works of the mystics. He became convinced that he had been appointed by God to restore Rome to its ancient grandeur. He was enough of an orator to win the ear of the people, and in May, 1347, he was proclaimed "Tribune, Illustrious Redeemer of the Holy Roman Republic." This was not quite enough;

human vanity overcame the divine agent, and the Romans were treated to "bread and circuses" and deluded into the belief that the days of the Gracchi had returned. Even Petrarch hailed the "Illustrious Redeemer," and saw nothing incongruous when Rienzo rode through the streets of fourteenth century Rome clad in a white silk toga with gold fringe and seated on a white horse.

Rienzo did not limit his activities to Rome. He called upon the kings and princes of Europe to repair to Rome and get their power confirmed by the new *Romana Mater*. He sent out a summons to all the cities of Italy to attend a general assembly of the "national brotherhood" in Rome, and it is not without interest to note that twenty-five cities so far forgot the primary claims of self as to send delegates. Rienzo's career was as brief as it was spectacular. In December, 1347, a combination of unimpressed barons drove him from the city. He sought support from the Emperor Charles IV, who handed him over to the Pope, by whom he was kept in mild imprisonment.

Rienzo and Italy

The Rienzo fiasco did nothing to stabilize Rome. In 1351 one John Cerroni attempted to imitate the fallen Tribune, but with no success. Two years later Rome accepted the dictatorship of Francis Baroncelli, but his rule was so violent that Innocent IV took the somewhat confusing step of sending Rienzo to Rome in the hope of restoring order. Rienzo was welcomed by the citizens with an enthusiasm which, though seemingly unbounded, was not permanent enough to prevent his assassination scarce two months later (October 8, 1354).

Beyond the city the "States" of the Church were equally chaotic. Independent signories sprang up like mushrooms. The family of Malatesta controlled Rimini and the rival house of Montefeltre established itself in Urbino. In 1353 Innocent IV sent Cardinal Albornoz to win back the country to papal obedience. Albornoz was a soldier and a diplomat and profited much from his earlier military campaigns against the Moors in Spain. For thirteen years he fought and schemed in the papal interest, and by the wise expedient of granting well-established lords a formal confirmation of their holdings he reduced the "States" of the Church to a sufficient obedience to permit the return of the popes to Rome.

The "States" of the Church

Albornoz

But even the return of the papacy brought little peace to the Eternal City, for the inhabitants were torn between their desire to hold the papacy and their yearning for a republic. The feud between

the Colonna and the Orsini refused to die, and twice the city was invested and controlled by Ladislas, the vigorous King of Naples.

Naples

Naples enjoyed no more peace than any of the Italian States. In fact, Neapolitan history for a hundred and fifty years is one long, unrelieved tale of murders, intrigues, dynastic rivalry, and political disaster, the whole indicating a condition not far removed from anarchy.

Joanna I
(1343-1381)

Robert of Naples, the efficient grandson of Charles of Anjou, died in 1343, leaving only a granddaughter, Joanna, as his successor. Joanna had married her cousin, Andrew of Hungary, but the marriage was unrelieved by any signs of affection. Joanna was very young, very irresponsible, and very unscrupulous; her four husbands and an uncertain number of lovers won for her the title of the "shameless Queen." In 1345 she facilitated the murder of her husband-cousin and bestowed her hand upon Louis of Tarento. Convinced, after her fourth marriage, that she would have no heir, she adopted cousin Charles of Durazzo, only to change her mind and transfer her claims to cousin Louis of Anjou, brother of King Charles V of France. The net result of this consistent inconsistency was the creation of two rival parties within the house of Anjou; a Calabrian branch, supporting Charles, and a French line, represented by Louis.

Charles of
Durazzo
(1381-1386)

In 1381 Charles of Durazzo received the Neapolitan crown from Urban VI, invaded Naples, captured Joanna, and, most probably, contrived her death by strangulation. To keep Louis of Anjou from interfering, he surrendered his claim to Provence. Charles was succeeded in 1386 by his son Ladislas, and Ladislas by his sister Joanna II. The reigns of brother and sister were disturbed by the Angevins of France, Louis II, Louis III, and René.

Joanna II
(1414-1435)

Joanna II was as adoptive as Joanna I. In 1421 she chose Alphonse the Magnificent, King of Aragon and Sicily, as her heir, but in 1423 Alphonse was out of favor and Louis III of Anjou occupied his place. When Joanna II died, in 1435, Louis III at once seized his inheritance, but deprived of adequate resources he was unable to withstand the persistent attacks of his rival. In 1442 Louis III returned to France, and Alphonse proceeded to reunite the kingdom of the two Sicilies. This union was maintained until the coming of Charles VIII.

The century of dynastic quarreling had greatly pleased the Neapolitan nobles, who were left free to act very much as they liked.

Throughout Apulia and Calabria they succeeded in establishing themselves according to the treasured principles of feudalism, and the King of Naples was in danger of being able to exercise but little power beyond the limits of the town that gave its name to the kingdom.

The last half of the fifteenth century was largely spent in clearing the way for the French invasion which inaugurated a new era, in which Italy became a convenient battleground where France, Germany, and Spain could fight out their quarrels, a sort of artichoke whose leaves were the spoil of any newcomer. As the century drew to a close the peninsula seemed to show a tendency to divide into a northern camp and a southern: Milan, Venice, and Florence, opposed to the papal "States" and the kingdom of the two Sicilies. But in neither case were the chains of alliance tightly bound, and in both the forces of disintegration were awake.

Milan completed the century under the guidance of the Sforzas. Francesco Sforza has been given the complimentary title of the "happy despot." Good soldier as he was, he was more inclined to foster peace than to lead armies in the field. It was part of his policy to keep on good terms with his neighbors, and he succeeded in bringing Milan into friendly relations with both Florence and France. He sent support to Louis XI when the "universal spider" was embroiled with The League of the Public Good. He was interested in all that concerned the Renaissance; took such care of his children's education that they were regarded as prodigies of learning; gave his favor to the University of Pavia; aided in the construction of civic buildings; and made his court attractive to men of culture.

His son, Galeazzo-Marie (1466-1476), hardly did credit to his training. He was dissolute, cruel, and even incurred the suspicion of poisoning his own mother. When he was murdered by two ardent Republicans, who had been overaffected by a reading of Sallust's *Catilina*, his own wife, Bonne of Savoy, admitted that he had received only what he deserved. But his death left the government to an infant son, Gian-Galeazzo, with the consequence that the actual administration fell to his three uncles. Of the three Ludovico il Moro was the ablest and most unscrupulous. He edged Bonne out of the way, kept Gian-Galeazzo from exerting any influence, and was probably responsible for his nephew's premature death. Yet, as was so often the case with these fifteenth century despots, Ludovico

*The Italian
artichoke*

*Milan under
the Sforzas*

*Galeazzo-
Marie
(1466-1476)*

*Ludovico
il Moro*

was abreast of the times. He was intensely interested in science, a friend and supporter of the great Leonardo, a dabbler in economics, a social reformer, and an advocate of improvements in such varied fields as irrigation, vine culture, and the planning of towns.

There was one cloud on the horizon. The young Gian-Galeazzo had been married to Isabelle of Naples, and the Aragonese power in the south was anxious to avenge the suspected murder. To protect himself from a possible Neapolitan attack, as well as to further his own ambitious projects, Ludovico turned to the old French alliance and offered his support to Charles VIII, then seriously considering an invasion of Italy in defense of the old Angevin claim.

Venice was faced with a new and delicate problem. She was still committed to a policy of land expansion, which would involve her with Milan, when the capture of Constantinople in 1453, by the Turks, created a new danger in the East. The collapse of the Greek Empire ended the long domination of Genoa in the Bosphorus, but now Venice must either support the Cross against the Crescent or strike a bargain with the Turk, for the sake of commercial gain. She chose the latter, to her disgrace and ultimate loss. The Turk continued to push westward, and Venice was compelled, after sixteen years of war, to abandon most of her Grecian properties, pay tribute to the Sultan, and see the Turkish forces in Albania. Yet as the century closed she seemed prosperous enough; merchants flocked to buy their glass, lace, and silks in her crowded bazaars, while Aldo Manuzio was busy printing exquisite copies of the Classics.

Florence was now enjoying the Golden Age of the Medici. Cosimo dei Medici (1389-1464) was not unlike Francesco Sforza. He sought peace rather than war, and closed alliances with Milan, Venice, the French king, and the Angevin claimants to Naples. The resultant years of peace fostered the flowering of the genius of the Renaissance, and to all of this Cosimo gave his aid and his favor. He was by nature cultivated and artistic. He supported Leonardo Bruni, "the Aretine," in his great work of translating Plato and Aristotle. At his court were to be found Massaccio, whose pictures reveal the revolt from formalism and the inspiration derived from nature and the human body; Fra Angelico; Fra Filippo Lippi; Ghiberti, whose gates for the baptistry were worthy of Paradise; Brunelleschi, who constructed the great dome of the cathedral; and Chrysoloras, who made popular the study of Greek. Cosimo was an astute politician,

whose plan lay in guiding Florence without an arrogant display of power.

His son, Peter (1464-1469), was so far inferior that an uprising under Luca Pitti nearly brought the rule of the Medici to an untimely end. But under Peter's son, Lorenzo (1469-1492), the fortune and prestige of the family were restored and brought to heights of splendor. Lorenzo was not the statesman that Cosimo was, but he was careful to avoid the appearance of despotism. He was intelligent and sympathetic with the new intellectual trends. He was on intimate terms with the most prominent leaders: Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Politian, and Botticelli. His Platonic Academy was famous throughout Europe, as were the great fêtes and civic diversions which he organized, and to which his protégés lent their genius.

But any despot, however cultured, will have enemies. In 1476 an attempt was made upon the lives of Lorenzo and his brother, Julian. The perpetrators were members of the Pazzi family, but one of the conspirators was Pope Sixtus IV. The plot only partly succeeded; Julian was killed, Lorenzo escaped, but in the general mêlée the Archbishop of Pisa was slain. This unfortunate incident brought on a war with the papacy, which ended only when Lorenzo was able to get a promise of support from the King of Naples.

When Lorenzo died, in 1492, the control passed to his son, Peter, who, as his earlier namesake, was thoroughly incompetent. His rule was shattered by the hypnotic oratory of Jerome Savonarola, an ascetic mystic, who by his inspired preaching whipped the city into a frenzy and drove the inhabitants to attack the luxuries which abounded and the system which brought them forth. Into this turmoil came Charles of France.

The failure of the conciliar movement had given the popes a splendid opportunity to take the lead in the pressing question of Church reform, and the fall of Constantinople offered them a chance to recover much of the prestige which had been lost during the Avignon period. But the papacy failed to turn either of these factors to any considerable advantage. Instead, the popes, with but two exceptions, slipped into the easier groove of Italian intrigue, became hopelessly entangled in temporal affairs, and by their generous support of the Renaissance antagonized many pious souls who, in very disappointment, turned away from Rome to seek a champion of reform in other quarters.

To be sure, the popes were faced with no simple task in attempting

Lorenzo the Magnificent (1469-1492)

The Pazzi conspiracy

Papal failure

to restore the papacy to the position it occupied in the mid-thirteenth century. The papacy, as an elected office, was by the very fact unable to pursue a consistent policy and was opposed by a hereditary feudalism and a jealously hostile College of Cardinals. To meet this double enemy with any hope of success it was necessary for the popes to find temporal support, and this, in its most reliable form, could be obtained by granting to members of their own families vacant fiefs of the Church or influential positions in the papal *Curia*. In other words, nepotism became a necessary evil, and each succeeding pontificate saw a re-allotment of lands and offices. The drains upon papal finances were heavy and proved an effective barrier to reform.

Nicholas V (1447-1455) was a typically Renaissance pope. Trained at Florence, he was an appreciative admirer of the Classics, and filled his *Curia* with scholars. His literary interests led him to bring together a collection of books, which developed into the Vatican Library under Sixtus IV. He was an active builder and repaired the walls, bridges, and aqueducts of Rome. His successor, Calixtus III (1455-1458), is interesting only as the first of the Borgia popes. Pius II (1458-1464) was an amazing and admirable character. He came from a noble Sienese family, and as a youth — his name was *Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini* — won wide reputation for his classical knowledge and from the composition of a thoroughly profane novel, *Euryalus and Lucretia*, of which he was later sincerely ashamed. His election to the papacy produced a complete change of spirit, for he devoted his pontificate to organizing a united Christendom against the Turkish menace. He is, furthermore, remarkable as “the last pre-Reformation pope to make the papacy a primarily spiritual office.”

Sixtus IV (1471-1484), who succeeded him, was of a very different stamp. Although a Franciscan, he was obsessed by an unrestrained craving for domination and an unhealthy desire to enrich his brothers and his eleven nephews. It was he who was implicated in the Pazzi conspiracy and who hurled the papacy into war against Lorenzo dei Medici. But it was he who hired Botticelli to beautify Rome, who built the exquisite Sistine chapel, and who reorganized Nicholas V's collection of books and manuscripts into the Vatican Library. After him the papacy sank into a rapid decline, which touched bottom in the unsavory pontificate of Alexander VI (1492-1503).

Naples, the object of the French invasion of Charles VIII, had

Nicholas V
(1447-1455)

Pius II
(1458-1464)

Sixtus IV
(1471-1484)

remained in the possession of Aragon since Alphonse the Magnificent had defeated his rival, Louis III of Anjou (1442). The reign of Alphonse I (1443-1458) had passed without undue incident, not so that of his natural son, Ferrante (1458-1494). Alphonse had united the kingdom of Aragon with that of Naples and Sicily, but the illegitimate birth of Ferrante caused a new division, with Ferrante in control of the Italian possessions.

Ferrante was a man devoid of either charm or kindness, whose administrative efforts were limited to complicated intrigues and ingenious torments. He possessed all of the weak man's love of power and worshiped the ideal of absolute monarchy. Yet even he did not escape the new spirit that was abroad in the land, and the classical revival expressed itself in public buildings fashioned after the best of antiquity.

The Neapolitan barons were always ready to embarrass the central authority, and their favorite device was to invite a claimant to contest the throne. This system had the triple merit of throwing the kingdom into confusion — a situation much favored by the feudalism — of providing a comfortable excuse for disobedience, and of enabling the nobles to sell promises of support for money or political concessions. Any candidate — save one who might become too strong — would do.

Acting in accord with this general principle, the barons had called upon Charles of Viane, the exiled but hereditary Prince of Aragon, to oppose the succession of Ferrante. From Charles they turned to René of Anjou, who, on the advice of Charles VII of France, decided to send his son, John of Lorraine, the Duke of Calabria. This Angevin attack threatened to be successful, but Ferrante received unexpected and timely aid, directly, from the brilliant Albanian general, Skanderbeg, and, indirectly, from an anti-French demonstration at Genoa. The Angevin party was beaten at Troja, 1462, and John returned to Provence. Twenty-three years later a revolt of the barons, ineffectively supported by Innocent VIII, was crushed by Ferrante. The barons had discovered that they could make little headway by themselves and turned again to the House of Anjou, whose representative now was Charles VIII of France.

“King” René of Anjou died in 1480, leaving no children, for John of Lorraine had died ten years before. There was a little grandson, René II, but Charles of Maine, brother of René I, had willed all of his rights and claims to Louis XI, King of France, and

Naples

*Ferrante of
Aragon
(1458-1494)*

*Neapolitan
loyalty*

these had now passed to Charles VIII. The claims of Charles VIII to the Neapolitan kingdom, coming indirectly as they did, and through the second, not the original, Angevin line, were not too clearly established. But Charles was led on by his own ambition and the promise of support from Neapolitan nobles, the Venetian Republic, and from Ludovico of Milan. The invasion of 1494 ended Italian individuality for nearly four centuries: henceforth Italy serves but to illustrate the complex politics of France, Spain, and the Empire.

The Italians may have had some dim warning of the fate that was soon to make the peninsula the pawn of European nations and a mere "geographic expression." Just when the possibilities of attaining nationhood were changing into impossibilities, indications of a national consciousness make fitful and pathetic appearances. Dante had, long before, dreamed of the day when Italy would once again be the garden of a world-wide Empire; Rienzo had aroused the hopes of a score of cities, Petrarch, though he scorned to read the *Divine Comedy* because it was written in Italian, hoped for a revival of Roman greatness, while Italians were revealing enough of patriotism to display a general contempt for foreigners and things foreign. The coming of the French stifled this embryonic nationalism; the departure of the French in 1871 coincided with its realization.

*The twilight
of Italy*

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CHAPTER XXIX

GERMANY IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

The state of the Empire

THE death of Frederick II threw the imperial situation into something like chaos. It is true that William of Holland was a king of sorts, but his following was of the slightest. The Hohenstaufens made no serious effort to keep the royal power in their own hands, and Conrad, their logical candidate, lost his life in a futile attempt to recover Naples and Sicily from the House of Anjou. When William died in 1256 both the German crown and the prospect of an imperial coronation were placed in the open market. It might be held, in logic, that the imperial office was of very doubtful value and that perhaps it would be better for Germany to forget all about it and concentrate upon the establishment of a strong centralized state within practical territorial limits. But such a solution would not suit the German princes, who had found in the infinite embarrassments of the imperial office a glorious occasion for the assumption of a virtually independent position. Nor could the long tradition and glamour of Empire be easily swept aside, to say nothing of the universally accepted political concept of a Christendom guided in spiritual matters by the vicar of Christ and controlled in temporal concerns by the Emperor. In the thirteenth century, as in the eleventh, a king was essential as providing the very keystone of the feudal arch and the ultimate source of whatever authority was exercised by princes, or of whatever independence was enjoyed by cities. But although a king there must be, individual interests advised against a king who answered to the old German definition of a king as "one who can," for fear that such a ruler might make the kingship a menace to princely interests.

The election of 1257

In 1257 seven of the leading German princes, lay and spiritual, solved the problem of continuing the kingship without acquiring a dangerous king by electing two kings whom geography made equally innocuous. The archbishops of Cologne and Mainz, the King of Bohemia, and the Count of Bavaria chose, as their titular superior, Richard of Cornwall, brother of King Henry III of England, while

the Archbishop of Trèves, the Duke of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg preferred the distant rule of Alphonse of Castile. Beyond suggesting the political attitude of the German princes, the election of 1257 is important as revealing the fact that the election of the German king had become the prerogative of "Seven Electors," for no other magnates seem to have claimed any right of voting.

From 1257 until the death of Richard in 1272, Germany with two kings had practically none at all, and so clearly was this recognized that the period has been called the Interregnum. Indeed, the kingship appreciably declined in power as in prestige, for Richard made generous grants of land and privileges to the great ones and, by giving them a free hand, encouraged their quasi-independence.

The long years of civil war between Welf and Hohenstaufen, the struggle between Empire and papacy, and the Great Interregnum had so changed Germany that it bore little resemblance to the land of the Ottos. Of the five stem duchies not one had remained intact; Swabia and Franconia had disappeared altogether, Saxony and Bavaria had been split up at the Diet of Erfurt (1181), while Upper Lorraine had been transformed into the Rhine Palatinate. In the place of tribal duchies great family estates had emerged: the Ascanian family controlled Saxony and Brandenburg; the House of Wittelsbach, Bavaria and the Palatinate; while the houses of Wettin, Luxemburg, Habsburg, and Hohenstaufen ruled a miscellaneous allotment of territories which prevented efficient centralized control. The absence of a uniform acceptance of the principle of primogeniture and the consequent practice of division among children had the obvious effect of multiplying the number of "immune" districts. To the east was the practically independent kingdom of Bohemia, which temporarily controlled Austria, Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola. In the northeast the Teutonic Order exercised a virtual sovereignty over the lands it had conquered beyond the Oder. Across the north stretched the power of the Hansa; in the west and southwest a score or more of free or imperial cities, such as Cologne, Mainz, Frankfort, Nuremberg, Aix-la-Chapelle, Ulm, Strasbourg, and Regensburg, formed little islands of immunity from local control and added another obstacle to the attainment of uniformity. Italy was imperial only in name or in the dreams of her poets.

Territorial disunion was matched by a political disunion no less marked. The Emperor was, to be sure, the recognized head of the State, but his position possessed more of honor than of power.

The Interregnum

A new Germany

Political disunion

There was no imperial or royal administrative system which permitted the king to control the actions of his subjects, there was no standing army, there was no royal revenue, as such. What power the King of the Romans could wield must come from his own family estates and from the so-called "imperial" lands that were attached to the office. In the vast areas subject to the leading princes, in scores of districts favored by royal charters, the king's writ did not run; into these districts his judges, his agents of administration or finance had no authority to penetrate. Within their own districts the princes of the Empire, as immediate vassals, exercised exclusive control of justice, coinage, taxation, and market and toll rights. In fiscal and administrative matters these regions were enclaves of independence. Naturally the lesser nobles and the towns sought a similar autonomy.

In 1273 the "electors" of Germany ignored the title of Alphonse of Castile, who, in fact, had never visited his kingdom, and proceeded to fill the vacancy created by the death of Richard of Cornwall. Their choice fell upon one Rudolf, whom Ottocar of Bohemia slightly termed "the pauper Count of Habsburg." Rudolf, however, was by no means so insignificant as Ottocar implied or as history has believed, for he ranked high among the great landowners of Germany. The Habsburg estates had their center in the valleys of the Aar and the Reuss, but they ran north to the upper Rhine, extended along both banks as far as Basle, and then followed the left bank into Alsace as far as Breisach. Furthermore, the Habsburgs were supporters of the Hohenstaufens; Rudolf had been a friend of Frederick II and had accompanied Conradin on the fatal journey into Italy. It may be, as is often said, that the electors chose Rudolf because of his comparative weakness, but it is hard to credit this. In addition to his land strength he was known to be a man of forceful personality and one who had shown unusual vigor in repressing disorder within the lands under his jurisdiction.

Rudolf of Habsburg was not the type of man to be content with the rôle of a puppet king. He was an attractive figure, with a rather majestic air, tall, with a seriousness of countenance which the characteristic paleness of the Habsburgs served to heighten. A man of conspicuous bravery, he did not permit himself to be carried away into deeds of derring-do where valor was its own and only reward. He possessed a very practical soul and a spirit of determination which had already led the Bishop of Basle to cry out: "Sit still on

*Rudolf of
Habsburg
(1273-1292)*

His character

Thy throne, O Lord, else the Count of Habsburg will push Thee off." He had none of that craving for luxurious ostentation which was rapidly spreading throughout Germany to the economic embarrassment of the nobility. He dressed in the simplest manner, was the friend of the city populations, and was on intimate terms with the men of the middle classes, many of whom he chose as his officials.

Rudolf's common sense, cool-headedness, and appreciation of the practicable saved him from chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of Empire. Indeed, he had so little imperial ambition that he abandoned all claims to Sicily, Naples, or the Matildan inheritance and confirmed the concessions made to the papacy by Otto IV at Neuss and by Frederick II in the Golden Bull of Eger. The same desire to adapt ends to means conditioned his conduct in Germany. The embarrassments of his predecessors had been accompanied by the distribution of imperial lands among the actual or potential enemies of the crown as bribes for nonresistance or bids for support. What little remained, Rudolf intended to keep intact and even to increase by rights of escheat or by reclaiming lands acquired by usurpation or doubtful title. He began with Ottocar II, King of Bohemia.

Austria, the old East Mark, had been in the hands of the Babenberg family until the extinction of the house in 1246. In 1251 Ottocar II seized Austria and with it Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, giving a semblance of justification by contracting a marriage with the widow of the late duke. In 1276 Rudolf instituted a sort of *quo warranto* proceeding against Ottocar and, upon the Bohemian king's refusal to prove his title, launched a campaign against him. In this venture Rudolf was supported by a surprising number of German nobles and the Austrian subjects of Ottocar. Ottocar was compelled to treat and promised to resign the Austrian possessions. But, either too confident of his own ability or irritated by the reproaches of his wife, who accused him of deficiency in spirit, Ottocar revoked his promise. In 1278 a new force was sent against him, his army was overwhelmed at Marchfeld, and Ottocar succumbed to sixteen wounds received on the field and a treacherous thrust from a personal enemy as he was being led to the tent of his conqueror.

The battle of Marchfeld restored the Austrian possessions to Germany. But Rudolf, by bestowing Austria and Styria upon his son Albert and Carinthia and Carniola upon other members of his family, laid the foundations of the Habsburg power in the East which lasted until our own day. Austria tended more and more to separate from

Politics

*Rudolf and
Bohemia*

*The beginnings
of Habsburg
greatness*

the rest of Germany and to pursue a course of independent action.

For the rest of his reign Rudolf was actively engaged in an effort to restore and maintain order within his kingdom. He was a very terror to the robber barons who preyed on the countryside or enriched themselves from the plunder of merchant caravans. He destroyed some sixty nests of these harpies in Thuringia and three score and ten in old Swabia and Franconia. He issued a *Landfrieden* or proclamation of a general peace, in the hope of repressing disorder, and urged the princes to do the same within their districts; to facilitate trade he abolished all unauthorized tolls and toll barriers and created a Court of Judiciary to investigate abuses; he appointed *Landvögte* to protect the common weal in his Habsburg and imperial territories, and he established royal castles (*Reichsburgen*) to enforce the peace. He did not succeed as he had hoped, but if he did arouse the anxiety and hostility of the nobles who dreaded the extinction of the right of private war, he won the approval of the cities and the Mendicant Orders and the gratitude of the population. He left the monarchy stronger than he had received it, and he established the fortunes of his house on a firmer foundation than he or any of his contemporaries dreamed.

In the election which followed the death of Rudolf, the electors left no doubt as to their intentions. The obvious candidate was Albert of Habsburg, whose election Rudolf had vainly attempted to bring about. But the addition of Austria and Styria to the family possessions in Switzerland and Alsace, Rudolf's dislike for governmental chaos, and the not unimportant fact that Albert was very much his father's son militated against him. Nothing reveals the self-interest of the princes more clearly than their selection of Adolph of Nassau (1292-1298).

Adolph had much to recommend him. Though a warrior of recognized ability, he was without landed wealth and was not too closely related to any prominent and powerful family. Further, he was willing to pay almost any price—the only things he could offer were imperial lands and political privileges—to obtain the honor of a crown. Once made King of the Romans he tried to make something of his position by imitating the policy of the abler Rudolf. He sought the support of the Rhine towns by abolishing all toll restrictions and supported the lesser knights against the princes. The net result of his policy was to antagonize the princes who so far forgot

themselves as to support Albert of Habsburg, who had never abandoned his claims, and who in 1298 took the field against the king. In July, the forces of Adolph and Albert met at Göllheim, and the king was slain by the hand of his rival. One act of great future significance marks the reign of Adolph of Nassau. He recognized and promised imperial protection to the "Perpetual Pact," signed by the three Forest Cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden as a defensive measure against the aggressions of the House of Habsburg.

The princes and nobles who had supported Albert in his successful war against Adolph were now compelled to make a virtue of necessity and accept the victor of Göllheim as King of the Romans. Albert (1298-1308) had much of the solid worth of his father. He had the same strength of character and sternness and, to one contemporary at least, appeared "hard as a diamond." He imitated his father in almost every particular; he took up the cause of the cities and granted them the right to admit to the duties and privileges of citizenship the *Pfahlbürger* (those who inhabited the regions immediately adjacent to the city walls), whom the nobles hoped to keep within their own power; and he favored the merchant interests by attacking the obstructive system of tolls along the Rhine. He tried unsuccessfully to weaken the strength of the great princes by increasing the power of the lesser nobles and by bestowing privileges upon the bourgeoisie. His concentration upon Germany and the establishment of order within the kingdom to the complete exclusion of imperial pursuits called forth a reproach from Dante, who attributed the ills of Italy to Habsburg neglect:

"O German Albert, who abandonest
 Her who has now grown savage and untamed,
 And oughtest to bestride her saddle bows,
 May righteous judgement, falling from the stars,
 Come on thy blood, and be so new and plain,
 That thy successor shall have fear of it;
 Because ye two, thy father and thyself,
 Have been held back by greed of yonder things
 Until the empire's garden is a waste."

(Purgatorio VI, 97-105.)

The "greed of yonder things" was the Habsburg family interests. In 1306 Albert bestowed the vacant crown of Bohemia upon his son Rudolf, but Rudolf died within the year and the Bohemians chose as his successor Henry of Carinthia, who had married the grand-

Albert I
(1298-1308)

The "greed
of yonder
things"

daughter of the ill-fated Ottocar II. To regain this valuable addition to the swelling Habsburg domains, Albert was about to set out upon an invasion of Bohemia when he was struck down by his nephew (May 1, 1308), who gained by this dastardly act the immortal title of John the Parricide.

The rule of Albert had aroused the old fear of Habsburg domination and caused the princes to turn to a less formidable house. The election was a bit exciting, for in addition to the candidacy of Frederick of Habsburg, Philip the Fair of France exerted his influence in favor of his brother, Charles of Valois. Neither candidate was in any way acceptable, and the Archbishop of Trèves was able to procure the election of his brother, Henry of Luxemburg, who received the title of Henry VII. For the next century and over the governmental politics of Germany center around the rivalries of the houses of Habsburg and Luxemburg.

Henry VII
(1308-1313)

Henry of Luxemburg (1308-1313) had none of that adherence to the practical which had so characterized the Habsburgs. Perhaps because he was an Italian by birth and because Luxemburg was affected by Burgundian and French influences, Henry was filled with grand designs. The Habsburgs had used the royal office to increase the power and wealth of their family, and what a Habsburg could do a Luxemburger could duplicate. Nay, more, for the Habsburgs had restricted their efforts to Germany. Henry was an attractive figure, of middle height, a fine speaker, "with bright cheeks and fair hair" (though he was slightly squint-eyed); but he was too romantic, too ready to overestimate the means at his disposal and underestimate the forces of the opposition, and, most fatal of all, he was carried away by the glamour of Empire.

Henry and
Bohemia

For the moment Fortune smiled upon him. Hostility to Henry of Carinthia led the Bohemians to offer the crown of Bohemia to John of Luxemburg, son of the newly elected German king. The acquisition of Bohemia was of signal importance: it greatly increased the strength of the House of Luxemburg; it checked the Habsburg expansion to the east, and it tended, in later generations, to occupy the attention of the Luxemburgers to the exclusion of their German interests.

Henry and
Italy

Before Henry had made any real progress in the administration of Germany, he set off for Italy to gain the imperial crown. He had hopes of reconciling the intercity strife, of pacifying the long feud of Guelf and Ghibelline, and of making the imperial office once more

respected. He was doomed to disappointment, for the Guelf cities closed their gates against him, and when Dante called his own city of Florence the "viper that turns upon the entrails of her mother" and the "foul and impious Myrrha that burns for the embraces of her father Cinyras," he but revealed what little prospect there was of reestablishing concord in the peninsula. Henry received his imperial crown (June 29, 1312), but died shortly afterward of fever or poison, as he was preparing to reduce Florence to obedience.

The premature death of Henry VII caused something of a flurry among the electors. Frederick of Habsburg was still a candidate and had been busy gaining supporters. But although he gained the votes of three electors, the remaining four named Lewis of Wittelsbach, Duke of Bavaria, as their choice, and so started another German house on the highroad to fortune. Since the decisiveness of a majority vote had not as yet become an accepted principle, the unfortunate result of this double election was eight years of civil war, which ended only with the defeat and capture of Frederick at the battle of Mühldorf (1322). Indeed, the entire reign of Lewis of Bavaria is a long tale of civil disturbance, ecclesiastical controversy and political chaos, if not anarchy.

Lewis (1314-1347) possessed neither the gravity of the Habsburgs nor the romantic enthusiasm of Henry of Luxemburg. He was a good warrior, a man of striking physique, rather above the average height, and inclined to slenderness. A jovial sort of fellow, he loved the stag hunt and the dance, and his royal dignity sat lightly upon him.

Lewis' difficulties with the papacy began as soon as his troubles with Frederick of Habsburg had ended. Pope John XXII, an irascible, dried-up little old man of seventy-two years, disappointed in his efforts to procure the Empire for Charles IV of France, revived the claim of Innocent III to decide questions of disputed elections, and excommunicated Lewis for refusing to submit his title for the approval of the papal court. The consequences of this controversy were interesting and important: it stimulated the production of the *Defensor Pacis* (*The Defender of the Peace*) by Marsiglio of Padua, Lewis' court physician; it irritated Lewis to the point of creating a very futile antipope, and in Germany it stirred up enough of national pride to gain for Lewis considerable popular sympathy and enough of resentment to bring forth counterclaims from the electors.

The *Defensor Pacis* is one of the best known political treatises of

*The election
of 1314*

*Lewis the
Bavarian
(1314-1347)*

*Lewis and the
papacy*

the Middle Ages. It contains nothing very startling and little that is original, but "the style is trenchant and clear, and the argument is pushed home with decided vigor." Fundamentally, Marsiglio is advocating a doctrine of popular sovereignty, for "the legislator . . . is the people, or a majority of them," and he applies this doctrine to the Church as well, by going back to the almost forgotten definition of the Church as "the whole body of those believing in and professing the name of Christ" and expressing its will through a General Council. The intricate problem of the relation between Church and State is simplified by reducing the clergy to purely spiritual functions, subject to constant supervision and control by the State.

Lewis in Italy Lewis' excursion into Italy was a thoroughly impolitic move, and the example of Henry VII should have outweighed any appeals from Italian nobles and have dispelled any illusions of Italian devotion to an imperial ideal. The adventure consumed three years, added nothing to Lewis' reputation, and, if anything, weakened his position in Germany. He did receive the iron crown at Milan and the imperial crown at Rome; but he was obliged to receive the latter at the hands of the Roman populace, a fact which well might, in the minds of contemporary theorists, invalidate the title altogether, for the vicar of Christ was the recognized bestower of the imperial crown. Lewis, after his coronation, committed the folly of creating an antipope (Nicholas V), an act which served only to embitter the papal court and to alienate otherwise sympathetic churchmen in Germany.

*The passage of
the "Licet
juris"* The German nobles felt a very natural resentment at the papal claim to approve a German election, but fifteen years passed before anything like an official protest was put on record. However, in the summer of 1338 the electors, meeting at Rhense, asserted the sufficiency of a majority vote in the "electoral college" without any "nomination, approval, confirmation, assent, or sanction of the Apostolic See." This decision of the electors, which freed the imperial government from papal control, attained the dignity of an imperial statute when it received the approval of a general assembly of the princes at Frankfort (August 6, 1388). Known as the decree *Licet juris*, it declared, in part:

" . . . Whereas certain persons . . . falsely and with lying words declaring that the imperial office and its powers are from the pope, and that he who is chosen emperor is not truly emperor or king un-

less he shall previously have been confirmed, approved and crowned by the pope or by the Apostolic See, and through such base assertions and pestilent doctrines our Ancient Enemy stirs up strife, excites controversy, begets conflicts and kindles sedition,

Therefore, to put an end to such evils, with the advice and consent of the electors and the other princes of the Empire, we declare:— that the imperial office and its powers are directly from God alone, and that in accordance with the law and the ancient custom of the Empire, it is established that, when any person is elected emperor or king by the electors of the Empire, either unanimously or by a majority of them, immediately, in virtue of this election alone, he is to be held and called true King and Emperor of the Romans, . . . nor does he require the approval, the confirmation, the sanction or the consent of the pope, or the Apostolic See, or of any other person.”¹

The document reveals not only the exclusion of the papacy from German administration, the substitution of a “lay German empire for the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages,” but the appearance of the electors as the repository of the real power in the Empire.

Lewis followed the example of his immediate predecessors and strove to increase the prestige and wealth of the House of Wittelsbach. He was so far successful that the Wittelsbachs remained among the chief families of Germany until the “more memorable year” of 1918. In 1323 the Electorate of Brandenburg passed to the Empire by escheat and was given to the Emperor’s eldest son, Lewis. In 1341, by a flagrant abuse of authority, Lewis IV annulled the marriage of John Henry of Carinthia with Margaret Maultasch, the “Ugly Duchess” of Tyrol, and bestowed the divorcée, whose homeliness was as epic as the beauty of Helen, upon his son, the elector of Brandenburg. This arbitrary action brought upon the Emperor a bull of excommunication from the Pope, but it added the Tyrol to the lands of the House of Wittelsbach and drove a wedge between the Habsburg estates in Austria and Switzerland. The following year the death of William, Count of Holland, Zeeland, and Hainault, caused these valuable lands to pass to Lewis’ wife as sole heiress, and through her to her son, William of Wittelsbach.

This territorial acquisition caused no end of jealousy among the nobles, who at length offered the crown to Charles of Bohemia, grandson of Henry VII (July, 1346). Charles made no immediate effort to make good his title against Lewis. Indeed, he and his

*Lewis and
the House of
Wittelsbach*

¹ Emerton, E., *The Beginnings of Modern Europe*, p. 97.

*Opposition in
Germany*

father, "blind King John" of Bohemia, went off to aid Philip VI against the English invasion. At Crécy, John fell gloriously but unnecessarily: Charles prudently retired from the field. The German princes had not approved the French interests of Charles and gave him so little support upon his return that Lewis had no trouble in forcing his retirement to Bohemia. Lewis was preparing an expedition against his rival which might well have ended the fortunes of the House of Luxemburg, when he was stricken with apoplexy while hunting, and died October 11, 1347.

Lewis just missed being a great king. Surrounded by political theorists of such sanity as Marsiglio and William of Occam, it is strange that he did not pursue a more practical policy. The attitude of the electors and the resentment of the German people at the interfering claims of the papacy offered him an opportunity to assume the rôle of champion of nationalism, as a helpful preliminary to the establishment of a strong monarchy. The aggrandizement of his family but introduced a new element of discord and to the rivalry of Habsburg and Luxemburg added that of Wittelsbach.

The death of Lewis IV brought Charles IV into prominence and the House of Luxemburg to the possession of the imperial crown for nearly a century. Charles IV (1347-1378) was a very different person from most of his predecessors. He can hardly be regarded as a German at all; his father was the Luxemburg king of Bohemia, his mother was a Bohemian, his wife came from France, and he had passed a good deal of his youth in Italy. He had neither liking for, nor ability in, war, preferring to attain his ends by the subtler means of diplomacy and intrigue. This in itself was wise, for Charles IV was an unusually shrewd and clever man whose natural talents had been developed by wide reading. He was delighted with the works of Boccaccio and Petrarch, was a fluent linguist, and, not without excuse, fancied himself as a lawyer, historian, and theologian. Unlike the Luxemburgers, Charles IV was not fond of inordinate display and avoided the colorful idiosyncrasies of medieval costumes. He was not a likable man or one who would attract the devotion of friends or the loyalty of followers. He was melancholy, inclined to see the dark side of things, and had the unfortunate habit of never looking anyone in the eye. Sincerely religious, he was active in establishing monasteries and collected relics with a zeal that amounted almost to a passion. His religious enthusiasm expressed itself also through an active interest in the administration of justice

Charles IV
(1347-1378)

throughout his kingdom, and in an amelioration of legal penalties. Incidentally, he showed an intelligent interest in practical farming, was an authority on wood carving, and has left some really extraordinary crosses and prayer stools as evidences of his own ability with the knife.

Charles IV was primarily interested in the House of Luxemburg and the kingdom of Bohemia, and as a result Germany, during his reign, experienced a generation of political and social chaos. Nobles indulged their passion for private war, robber barons infested the highways or became river pirates and enriched themselves at the expense of traveling merchants, while the towns, to protect themselves from the encroachments of great nobles and the depredations of lesser lords, established leagues for mutual defense. To this general dislocation was added the horror of the Black Death and the barbarity of Jewish persecutions. But in 1356 the issuance of the so-called "Golden Bull" gave the reign of Charles IV an unusual significance.

Since the fall of the Hohenstaufens, imperial elections had been disturbed by the want of any recognized procedure. Double or contested elections had marked every change of ruler. A diet which assembled at Nuremberg in November, 1355, to deal with the general problems of the Empire, tabled other matters to regulate the conduct of future elections. The result was the Golden Bull, January 10, 1356.

After a literary preamble wherein Helen of Troy and Cæsar are to be found amid supernal fountains and flowering plants, the document gets down to serious business in thirty-one sections of legislation. The Electoral College is to consist of seven men: the archbishops of Mainz, Trèves, and Cologne; the King of Bohemia, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the Count-Palatine of the Rhine. Vacancies are to be filled within three months. Equal in importance to the establishment of the membership of the Electoral College are the sections dealing with the privileges of the electors. They are guaranteed an almost complete immunity from imperial control; they are given the power to "hold and possess with full rights, all mines . . . and all salt works," and to coin money; appeals from the courts of the electors can be made only to the Diet of the Empire. To insure the permanence of the four lay votes in the College, it is provided that the four electoral districts shall remain indivisible; that the right of vote shall be

*The neglect of
Germany*

*The Golden
Bull*

inseparable from the district; and that "on the death of one of the secular electoral princes his right, voice, and vote in the election shall descend to his first-born son who is a layman; if the son has died before this, to the son's first-born son who is a layman." Other clauses provide for the annual meeting of the electors, the proper course of training to fit first-born sons for their future electoral duties, the abolition of "all detestable . . . confederations and societies, which are or shall be made by cities or by persons . . . under color of any pretext whatever . . . without the consent of the lords of the persons or territories," and the denial of civic liberties and immunities to all *Pfahlbürger* not actually domiciled in the cities and paying taxes thereto.

It has been said that the Golden Bull "legalized anarchy and called it a constitution," but that judgment is a bit severe. It is true that the document recognized the virtual autonomy of the seven princes and the reduced power of the king, but the continuation of the Diet and the provision for the annual meeting of the electors suggest that confederacy, not anarchy, was being legalized. If something not remote from anarchy was the fate of Germany in the fifteenth century it was in spite, not because, of the Golden Bull. The omission of all mention of the Pope confirmed the action already taken in the *Licet juris*.

Charles avoided at all costs any rupture with the papacy. Indeed, he was so deeply indebted to the Pope for his crown that men called him the "priests'-king." At the time of his election he confirmed all papal claims in Italy; in 1355, when he went to Rome for his coronation, he brought no military force with him and, according to a previous agreement, stayed but one day in the capital of Christendom. Yet Charles IV worked hard to put an end to the "Babylonian Captivity," and he so far succeeded that in 1369 Urban V was induced to return to Rome, though he remained there but a year. In 1377, again owing to the Emperor's influence, Gregory XI transferred his residence from Avignon to the Eternal City, where he remained until his death.

Charles IV busied himself less with Germany than with Bohemia. He looked forward to the creation of a strong Eastern kingdom by uniting Poland and Hungary to his own inheritance, a plan which was frustrated when, in 1387, Poland was joined to Lithuania. For his kingdom of Bohemia he did much: he founded the University of Prague in 1348; he reformed the coinage, repaired and protected

Estimate

*Charles and
the papacy*

*Charles and
Bohemia*

the roads, drained the marshes, cleared the forests, and introduced improvements in agriculture. For the better administration of justice he drew up his *Majestas Carolina*, a law code which substituted the regularity of the Roman for the vagaries of feudal law. There is much of truth in the dictum that Charles IV was the "father of Bohemia." But Charles was unwittingly the source of future woe for his kingdom, for Bohemian students who were attracted to England as a result of the marriage of Charles' daughter, Anne, with King Richard II, brought back to the University of Prague the writings of John Wyclif of Oxford.

Luxemburg interests were not forgotten. Just as the Habsburgs had hoped to acquire a continuous stretch of territory from Austria to Switzerland in the South, so Charles IV attempted to join his eastern lands to Luxemburg in the North. In the furtherance of this object he acquired a number of districts known as the "Bohemian Islands"—the Lausitz, Lower Silesia, and, for a time, Brandenburg—procured in the first instance by supporting a pretender to the Ascanian inheritance, later by purchase from Lewis of Wittelsbach. If family interests were not forgotten the Golden Bull was. The indivisibility of electorates was ignored: the Lausitz was given to his son John; Brandenburg to Sigismund (whom he married to the heiress of Poland); Bohemia and Silesia to Wenzel.

Wenzel (1378-1410), who succeeded Charles IV as King of the Romans, was thoroughly unlike his father and unworthy of any office whatsoever. Although only eighteen years of age at the time of his accession to the throne, he had already begun a career of debauchery unrelieved by any intervals of purposeful activity. What royal business demanded his participation had to be attended to betimes in the morning, for by noon the king could be relied upon to have drunk himself into a state of political impotence. For the first eight years of his reign he failed to make any appearance in Germany, and the electoral princes considered the advisability of establishing a regency or a general Council of State. The long quarrel between the cities and the nobles continued, and, despite the Golden Bull, the Rhine towns and the Swabian League (recognized by Charles IV in 1378) formed a defensive and offensive alliance against the nobles, who in turn organized the League of the Lion. Nothing but the phantom of Empire remained. In 1400 the electors showed that sometimes the general welfare outweighed even private interests, for they deposed the bibulous Wenzel in favor of Rupert, Count-

*Charles and
the House of
Luxemburg*

*Wenzel
(1378-1410)*

*Leagues in
Germany*

Rupert

Palatine of the Rhine. But Rupert, although an able soldier and the bitter enemy of the towns, was too poor to do much in restoring order or anything to end the imperial schism. Even his death in 1410 failed to improve matters, but made them rather the worse, for not only had Rupert pledged the crown jewels to meet the bills of his apothecary and shoemaker, but the electors chose both Sigismund of Brandenburg and Jobst of Moravia to fill the alleged vacancy. Three kings meant virtually no king at all. But Jobst died in 1411, and Wenzel agreed to sell his imperial claims to his brother, keeping for himself the kingdom of Bohemia.

Sigismund
(1410-1437)

The Vehme

Sigismund (1410-1437) was a very fascinating character, but, unfortunately for the Empire, his political ability was far inferior to his personal attractiveness. He was the very ideal of knighthood, brave, with a slender, graceful figure and a handsome, laughing face; well educated, a fluent conversationalist in seven languages; and one of the few kings who deserved the plaudits which are the meed of royal orators. He had no liking for administrative routine or the irritating details of official business. Like his brother, he spent but little time in Germany, with the result that Germany continued in a state of general chaos and was compelled to rely upon voluntary efforts in the desperate attempt to maintain somewhat of order. In Westphalia appeared the *Vehme*, or self-created courts of law for the suppression of violence and the administration of rough justice. With startling rapidity the *Vehme* spread throughout north Germany, losing much of its original simplicity and developing into a secret, mystic society, not very unlike the Ku-Klux Klan in America and equipped with all the usual paraphernalia of signs, symbols, and secret grips. Sigismund did attempt to make his office an effective one, for twice he strove to obtain the financial means essential to any reform. In 1422 he advocated the imposition of a general tax to amplify the revenues from imperial lands and family estates, and again in 1427 he urged the collection of a "common penny" for the same purpose. Both efforts met with immediate opposition and ended in failure. Similar results attended his suggestions for a reformed currency and for the division of Germany into administrative "Circles."

Sigismund's
diplomacy

The most active part of Sigismund's career concerned his essays in large-scale diplomacy. He offered his services as a mediator in the Hundred Years' War, but beyond receiving the Order of the Garter from the English king his enterprise came to nothing. He was more

successful in furthering the cause of Church reform. Sigismund regarded the welfare of the Church as a matter of prime imperial concern. Largely through his efforts John XXIII called the reforming Council of Constance (1414-1418); and when John fled the Council Sigismund was left in virtual control and must bear directly the responsibility for the burning of John Hus (January 6, 1415). The desperate Hussite wars which followed further diverted the attention of Sigismund from Germany, hastened the summoning of the Council of Basle, and delayed the Reformation for a century.

Of greater future than contemporary significance was the transfer of the Electorate of Brandenburg to the House of Hohenzollern. *Hohenzollern* Frederick of Hohenzollern, the Burgrave (chief municipal magistrate appointed by the Emperor) of Nuremberg, who had been one of Sigismund's most active supporters in his early contest for the Empire, received Brandenburg in 1415 as a reward for his faithful service. Frederick, an earnest champion of the Empire and Church reform, laid securely the foundations of his house and prepared the way for the amazing growth of Prussia.

With Sigismund's death in 1437 the House of Luxemburg became extinct, and his lands passed to his son-in-law, Albert of Austria. The electors chose Albert, despite the fact that he was a Habsburger and had just increased his power through the Luxemburg inheritance. It may be that they relied upon the Habsburg policy of strengthening Austria to the neglect of Germany, or that they were afraid of possible restrictions upon their activities if they elected Frederick of Hohenzollern, the only other serious candidate.

Albert II did not live long enough (he died in 1439) to effect anything of importance or to arouse the jealous fear of the German princes. The shortness of his reign was a misfortune, for Albert was of serious disposition, practical, knew what needed to be done, and was prepared to do what he could to repair an admittedly bad situation. His election to the kingship of Bohemia was the signal for a renewed civil war in that unhappy country. Albert was interrupted in his efforts to restore order in Bohemia by a Turkish attack upon Hungary. While operating against this new enemy he fell ill and died October 27, 1439. The election of 1438 has this historic interest, that it marks the return of the Habsburgs to the imperial throne. With the exception of thirteen years (1742-1765), the House of Habsburg provided the only bond of union for the phantom confederacy of German states, from 1438 until Napoleonic

*The election
of 1438*

*Albert II
(1437-1439)*

practicality put an end to the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. When the Empire was revived in 1871 it was a descendant of Albert's rival, Frederick of Hohenzollern, who received the new title.

The electors once again passed over Frederick of Hohenzollern and chose Frederick of Habsburg as King and Emperor. Frederick III (1440-1493) was a colorful and quite useless king. For over fifty years the interests of the Empire were forgotten in the delights of the royal garden at Vienna, which *Æneas Sylvius* compared, rather vaguely, to the "gardens of Hesperides." Frederick had not been particularly well endowed by nature. His mother was best known for her exaggerated piety and physical strength, for she could crack nuts with her fingers and bend horseshoes like Charlemagne. Frederick did not inherit his mother's energy. He was dreamy and irritatingly phlegmatic. He was mildly interested in astronomy, palmistry, and prognostic science, and very much so in fruits and flowers. He believed in the future of Austria, and while he did nothing in particular to help the Empire, he showed a quaint genius in designing a complicated monogram comprising the letters A.E.I.O.U. and in composing sibylline prophecies using these vowels in sequence. Some forty sentences were derived, all indicating the greatness of Austria: *Austria est in orbe ultima; Aquila est imperatrix orbis vasti; Austriæ est imperare orbi (omni) universo; Alles Erdreich ist Osterreich unterthan*, etc.

Little was to be expected of such a man, and little indeed was done, and that little proved harmful. Frederick rarely visited Germany. He developed the irritating habit of calling diets and then failing to appear when they assembled, and in many ways justified the chronicler who complained that the "nation almost forgot it had a king." Even the selfish princes discovered that general political disintegration endangers private interests. In 1455 the electors attempted to put into operation a scheme for better administration, but Frederick's utter indifference rendered it abortive.

It is hard to estimate whether Frederick did more harm by doing nothing or by his rare efforts at administration. It is certain that he continued ecclesiastical evils by supporting the papacy. Here the fault may lie with *Æneas Sylvius*, a brilliant churchman and adroit intriguer, whose timely political conversions finally made him Pope. Germany had supported the conciliar movement, and in 1446, by the Pragmatic Sanction of Mainz, had annulled the payment of annates to the papal *Curia* and had prohibited direct papal appoint-

Frederick III
(1440-1493)

More neglect

Frederick and
the papacy

ments to German churches. But this attempt to revive the old days of Seligenstadt and Höchst, to imitate England and France, and to give Germany something of a national Church was crushed by Frederick's acceptance of the Concordat of Vienna (1448). The *annates* were restored, as were most of the old rights of patronage and presentation: councils remained under the control of the popes, and by the Bull *Execrabilis* (1460), Pope Pius II (Æneas Sylvius) declared it heretical to appeal from a Pope to a General Council.

The Concordat of Vienna

If Frederick had but added "Anarchy everywhere indicates organic unfitness" to his mystic sentences, he might have tempered the judgment of posterity upon his ability. Indeed, anarchy or something very close to it prevailed from the Rhine to the Theiss. Leagues of cities against nobles and leagues of nobles against cities or other nobles revealed the impotence of all but voluntary government. The hopelessness of obtaining justice in the ordinary courts stimulated a revival in feuds. Even the peasants reacted to the general chaos and broke out in the first of the agitations for improved conditions of livelihood which were to trouble Germany for three-quarters of a century. To the east, not only were the Turks a very active menace, but in 1458 the *Utraquist* party in Bohemia elected its leader, George Podiebrad, as king in opposition to the Habsburgs, while Hungary offered obedience to Matthias Corvinus, son of John Hunyadi, the hero of the relief of Belgrade. The separation of Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria seriously weakened the eastern frontier.

Anarchy

In 1486 the electors demonstrated the seriousness of the general situation by electing Frederick's son Maximilian as co-king, in an effort to check the spreading disintegration of political life and social order. Maximilian was not without merit, but he was too ambitious. His marriage with Mary of Burgundy (1477) and his betrothal to Anne of Brittany (1490) brought him into diplomatic complications with Charles VIII, both in France and Italy. Marriages, however, if complicating for the Empire, were profitable to the Habsburgs. The Low Countries came with Mary of Burgundy, Artois and Franche-Comté were procured as the dowry of Margaret of Habsburg, the repudiated bride of Charles VIII. Later on, the marriage of Maximilian's son, Philip, to Mad Joanna of Spain (1496), was to give to the Habsburgs the Spanish possessions in Europe and the Western world. Remarkably true was the epigram: *Bella gerant alii; tu felix Austria nube.*

Maximilian as co-king

Maximilian
(1493-1519)

Maximilian (1493-1519) enjoyed a tremendous personal popularity, and there must indeed have been much in this "last of the knights," with his handsome face, his armor of shining silver, and his passion for the chase, to make him beloved by his contemporaries. A military organizer of recognized ability, he transformed the heavy-armed German foot soldier into the mobile *Landsknecht* armed with a long lance. He was an authority on fortifications, an appreciative patron of arts and letters, and the author of *Teuerdank*, a romantic epic. But he lacked stability, was impetuous in making decisions, and ultravisionary in his schemes. He seriously supported Perkin Warbeck, the hopeless pretender to the English throne; he threatened to take service with the Turks, and he considered the possibility of being both Pope and Emperor at once.

Political
reformers

Maximilian's reign is noteworthy for the change of political front made by the nobles. A century of chaos and disorganization had convinced a number of the princes that their interests would be better served and their importance increased by operating on a national rather than a local scale. As early as 1484 a Reform Party had come into being under Berthold of Henneberg, the Elector of Mainz. The reformers proposed a semi-independent committee of nobles to take charge of the central administration. In 1495 the Diet of Worms took advantage of Maximilian's contest with Charles in Italy to secure the appointment of a permanent Imperial Chamber (*Reichskammergericht*) with sixteen assessors or judges, nominated by and responsible to the electors and the Diet. The Imperial Chamber was to function as a Court of Appeals and, in the king's absence from Germany, as a Council of Regency. In addition, the Diet authorized a general tax, the "Common Penny," which combined a property tax upon the rich and a poll tax upon the poor. The privilege of private war was abolished and a public peace was proclaimed.

The Diet
of Worms
(1495)

The Diet
of Augsburg
(1500)

Unfortunately, the Imperial Chamber had no means of enforcing its decisions, and the classes not represented in the Diet (e.g., the "imperial knights") refused to pay the Common Penny. But in 1500 the Diet of Augsburg made some headway. In return for the levy and maintenance of 34,000 men, Maximilian agreed to the creation of a separate Council of Regency (*Reichsregiment*) to supervise the administration of Germany, which in the interests of efficiency was divided into six (later, ten) "Circles." Two years later Maximilian, in opposition to the Council of Regency, established a per-

sonally appointed Aulic Council (*Hofrath*) exercising supreme administration and judicial power over all business that could "flow in from the Empire, Christendom at large, or the King's hereditary principalities" and subject to royal control. Attempted reform had therefore created an Imperial Chamber and an Aulic Council and had provided for the administrative division of Germany into Circles (Franconia, Bavaria, Swabia, the Upper Rhine, Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Lower Rhine, Upper Saxony, Austria, and the county of Burgundy). But reform ended in failure and the Germany of the Reformation betrayed as little unity as the Germany of the Renaissance. Yet the collapse of the central government had not paralyzed all local activities. Everywhere Germany was teeming with energy which expressed itself in manifold ways: in the political struggles of the Swiss; in the economic progress of the towns and the Hanseatic League; in the conversion of the Slavs and the settlement of the lands beyond the Oder and the Vistula; and in intellectual curiosity.

Switzerland was part of the old duchy of Swabia and, as such, recognized the lordship of the Zähringen dukes. In 1231 Frederick II had recognized the self-governing commune created by the peasants of the forest canton of Uri as independent of all authority save that of the Emperor, and nine years later he bestowed the same privilege upon Schwyz. With the extinction of the duchy, the Swiss refused allegiance to any save the Emperor and particularly resented the attempts of the counts of Habsburg to win for themselves the position held by the House of Zähringen.

When Count Rudolf was elected to the kingship in 1272, the activities of the Habsburgs centered for the moment about Austria and Bohemia, and the Swiss had an opportunity to consider how best to meet the danger threatened by a forced recognition of allegiance to the local Habsburgers, not as Habsburgers, but as kings and emperors. In 1291 Uri and Schwyz were joined by Unterwalden in the formation of an "Everlasting League" or "Perpetual Pact" for mutual defense against illegal aggression. The young league was favored by the passing of the Empire to Adolph of Nassau, the eastern difficulties of Albert II, and the acquisition of the imperial office by the houses of Luxemburg and Wittelsbach, both of which were glad to embarrass their Habsburg rivals by encouraging the Swiss and by confirming the Everlasting League of the three Forest Cantons. In 1315 Frederick of Austria attempted to punish the

The Aulic Council

The failure of reform

Switzerland

The "Everlasting League" (1291)

Swiss for supporting his rival, Lewis of Bavaria, but his forces were routed at Morgarten, and in 1318 he abandoned all claim to administrative authority over the Forest Cantons.

The long reign of Lewis of Bavaria and the longer period of the Luxemburg dynasty continued to favor the growth of Swiss independence, for not only did the Swiss profit by family jealousies, but the Wittelsbach territories prevented any union of Habsburg lands in the East and West. Profiting by these circumstances the Everlasting League increased its membership and strength: Luzerne joined it in 1330, Zürich in 1351, Glarus and Zug in 1352, Berne in 1353. In 1386, the Habsburgers under Leopold made their last effort to crush the League, but on July 9, in the narrow way at Sempach, the optimistic Germans were thrown into disorder by boulders rolled down the mountain side and were routed by the steady advance of the Swiss infantry, armed with their terrible twenty-two-foot lances.

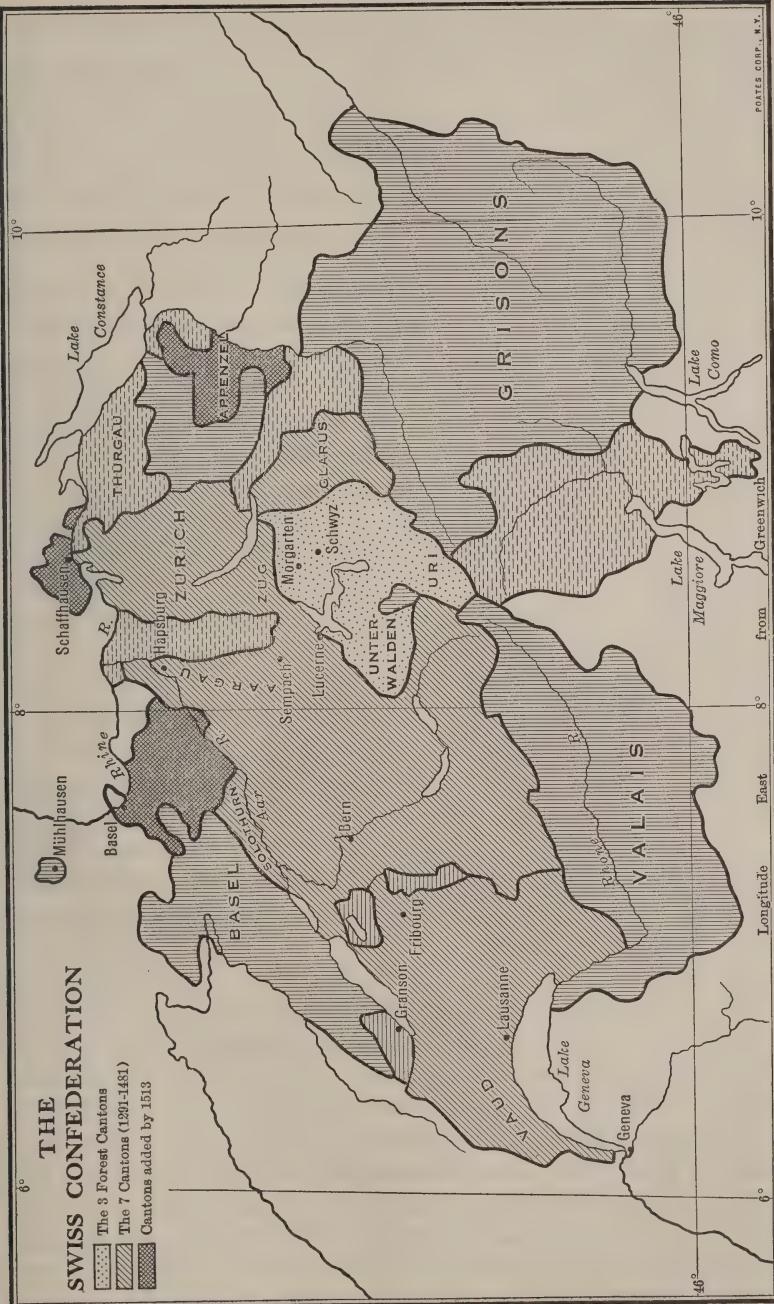
The battle of Sempach
The League developed rapidly during the fifteenth century and began that defensive policy of territorial aggrandizement which ended in the attainment of the present Swiss frontier. The strange alliance between the Swiss League and Sigismund of Habsburg against Charles the Bold was made possible only by the renunciation of all Habsburg rights over the territory of the League. And as the century closed Maximilian of Habsburg acknowledged the independence of Switzerland.

League organization
The Swiss League was at best only a loose federation of cantons, each member controlling its own local affairs entirely. All the members were allied to the original three Forest Cantons, but not necessarily to the other members. Glarus, for example, had no direct connection with Zug, nor Zug with Berne. Only vital matters affecting the welfare of the whole federation were treated in a general assembly or diet.

Town Leagues
Cities have ever been both the refuges of civilization and the barracks of industry, and, in consequence, they have always been foremost among the advocates of order and stable government. When the central government in Germany failed utterly to make the roads and rivers safe for merchants or to protect the towns from the degradations of nobles who envied the new commercial wealth but scorned to earn it, it was but natural that the towns and cities found themselves forced into unions for obvious purposes of defense. Leagues of towns had not been uncommon in Germany, especially since the formation of the Rhine League in 1254; and in 1376, de-

THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

The 3 Forest Cantons
The 7 Cantons (1291-1451)
Cantons added by 1513



spite the clauses of the Golden Bull, the cities of South Germany organized the Swabian League, which Charles IV recognized in 1378. A League of the Rhenish cities was created in 1381. But the leagues had no permanence. Medieval logic accepted the doctrine that "what is one man's meat is another man's poison," applying it to commercial enterprise and denying the possibility of mutual benefit in trade. One splendid exception to this one-sided principle was the very successful Hanseatic League.

The herring Nothing more romantic than the arbitrary choice of the Baltic as a spawning ground by myriads of herring lies at the bottom of the early prosperity of the North German cities of Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen, and the Scandinavian town of Wisby in Gothland. The fishing trade was a most lucrative one in an age when the eating of meat was prohibited for nearly three months out of the year. Herrings brought wealth not only to the towns located along the Baltic, but to Cologne, which controlled much of the North-South trade, and to Bruges, which served as a general clearing house for the North and West.

The "Hansa" Merchants and traders found the dangers from pirates, the legal difficulties (since every man carried his own law with him), and the disabilities placed upon aliens an accumulation of obstacles too serious for the individual to overcome. The obvious remedy was to form a *Hansa* or "group," much as the great merchant companies were formed in the seventeenth century or convoys were organized in the dark days of the twentieth. As early as 1230 Hamburg and Lübeck had instituted such a *Hansa*, and from this modest beginning developed the great Hanseatic League with its fourscore members and its "steelyards" or "factories" and its agents from London to Novgorod.

The Hanseatic League Economic interests alone did not hold the League together. Just as fear of Habsburg aggression provided the strongest bond in the early years of the Swiss Confederacy, so did fear of Denmark unite the towns of the *Hansa*. The herring preferred the coasts of Skaania above all other places in the Baltic. Skaania (now in Sweden) was then a Danish province, and the Dane drew no delicate distinctions between piracy and trade. To complicate matters Valdemar III of Denmark became ambitious and, for a time, threatened to make the Baltic a Danish lake. He sacked Wisby in 1361 and annihilated the League fleet at Helsingborg in the following year, but in 1370 he was overwhelmed, and the Danes were obliged to accept the humiliat-

ing Treaty of Stralsund. By the terms of this treaty, the League was put in possession of the castles of Skaania, thereby securing complete control of the fisheries, while another clause provided for the approval of the League in all future successions to the Danish throne.

The Hanseatic League declined nearly as rapidly as it had developed. Its organization had never been very efficient, even with its general assemblies (*Hansatag*) and the grouping of the towns into four "Circles" for administrative purposes. Cities entered and withdrew as local interests dictated, and constantly quarreled with each other; the jealousy of nobles hampered the full activity of the towns; the discovery of America gave European commerce a new orientation; last but not least the humble herring, for reasons known only to itself, forsook the Baltic for the North Sea, and with its departure departed much of the prosperity of the *Hansa* towns. The London "Steelyard" maintained a precarious existence until the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was swept away to permit the construction of the Cannon Street Railway Station.

The impotence of the imperial government in maintaining order, revealed by such voluntary associations as the city leagues, the leagues of nobles, the *Vehme*, and the *Hansa*, was indirectly responsible also for the important position assumed by the knights of the Teutonic Order in the northeast. The Teutonic Order had its origin in a "hospital unit" organized for the care of German wounded at the siege of Acre (1190) and was unique in being a national rather than an international society. In 1226 Hermann of Salza, Grand Master of the Order, received permission from Frederick II and the Pope to transfer the activities of the knights from war against the Moslems to a war of conversion against the Slavs, while an imperial charter invested the Order with whatever land it might conquer.

Germans had been spasmodically active in missionary work among the Slavs since the eleventh century, and the missionary had been followed by the colonist. The conquest of the Wends by Henry the Lion and Albert the Bear had permitted the establishment of towns and the creation of bishoprics in Mecklenburg and Pomerania, so that by the thirteenth century the land between the Elbe and the Oder was fairly well Christianized and Germanized. Beyond the Oder and the Vistula, however, in Prussia, in Lithuania, and in Livonia, the Slavic peoples were pagan and hostile, and had repulsed the warrior-missionaries of the Order of the Sword (founded in 1200

Its decline

Voluntary associations

Eastward expansion

by the Bishop of Riga). It was a splendid opportunity for the Teutonic knights.

The knights of the Teutonic Order

The Order crossed the Vistula in 1231 and within four generations had pushed as far east as the Gulf of Finland. The work of conquest was carried on methodically and intelligently. As each new region was occupied fortresses were constructed to protect the district and to form nuclei of towns. Thorn, Danzig, Kulm, Königsberg, and Marienburg flourished as centers of industry and attracted what of culture the region possessed. Colonists flocked into the conquered territories, fields were cultivated, orchards set out, and by the opening of the fifteenth century nearly a hundred cities and over a thousand villages, connected by canals and roads, testified to the efficiency of the Teutonic knights.

Decay

But, to misquote a proverb and state a truth (at least so far as Orders, monastic or military, are concerned) : "nothing fails like success." With the conversion of the Slavs the fundamental purpose of the Order had been effected and its continued existence became an anomaly. The Order encountered an invincible enemy in luxury; its revenues, increased by direct participation in industry and the manufacture of guns and gunpowder, and by the taxation of all commercial undertakings, were squandered in gargantuan banquets and spectacular, but for the most part futile, exhibitions and shows. Again, while the maintenance of military discipline over pagan Slavs could surely be held excusable, it was equally sure to arouse resentment among Christian German subjects. The Order received its first setback in 1387, when Jagello, the Christian Prince of Lithuania who had married Hedvig, heiress of Lewis the Great of Hungary and Poland, became the King of Poland as Ladislas I. The union of Poland and Lithuania destroyed any excuse for the continuance of the Teutonic Order in Lithuania as an administrative body. The Order, weakened by internal dissension and fading morale, was unable to withstand the combined attack of the Polish-Lithuanian forces and suffered a crushing defeat at Tannenberg (1410). Fifty years later it had lost everything but East Prussia and even that was held as a fief of Poland. In 1525, when the Grand Master, Albert of Hohenzollern, became a Protestant, the Order was dissolved, Albert became Duke of Prussia, and the second chapter in the long history of the Hohenzollern family was written.

Lithuania-Poland

The battle of Tannenberg (1410)

The war between the Teutonic Order and Poland-Lithuania was but one example of a similar conflict between Teuton and Slav along

the whole eastern frontier and especially in Bohemia. There the *Bohemia* Czechs were engaged in a determined effort to establish a "national state" and to associate themselves with the Slavs in the East rather than with the Germans in the West. Under Charles IV Bohemia had enjoyed a measure of independence which encouraged it to a trial of strength with the Emperor Sigismund in the so-called Hussite Wars. In 1458 the accession of George Podiebrad to the Bohemian throne seemed for the moment to realize the "national" ambitions. But Germany was too strong, and Bohemia could only preserve her Slavic affiliations by submitting to a personal union with Poland under Ladislas.

Hungary had much the same problem, though it paled before the *Hungary* frightful menace from the Turks. The native Arpad dynasty gave

way to the younger branch of the French House of Anjou in 1309. For seventy-three years the Angevins guided the destinies of Hungary and, on the whole, not too badly. Lewis the Great (1342-1382) extended his jurisdiction down the Danube to the Black Sea and over Dalmatia on the Adriatic. In 1370 he was elected King of Poland. His successors were of weaker stuff. To the Angevins succeeded Sigismund of Habsburg, who sacrificed national to family interests and personal profit. Family quarrels and racial jealousies paralyzed all efforts at serious government, and when the Turkish wave broke over the country, defense was conducted by native volunteers. John Hunyadi, who had fought the Turk at Varna, *John Hunyadi* Kossovo, and Belgrade, and his able son, Matthias Corvinus, restored Hungarian prestige for a brief generation. But Hungary was united to Bohemia and Poland in 1490, and this break in its political continuity prepared the way for ruin and disaster.

The Turkish menace, which had subsided appreciably since Ghenghiz Khan had terrorized Eastern Europe in the thirteenth century, was revived by the Ottomans in the fourteenth, when Gallipoli fell to the Sultan Orchan. The Ottoman Turks, who had risen out of the welter of the declining Moslem Empire, had built up an exceedingly efficient military force, relying chiefly upon the *Janissaries*, Christian captives trained from their youth for a military career. The capture of Constantinople in 1453, after a vigorous three-months' siege, opened the way for an attack upon Europe. Under Mohammed II the Turks advanced into the Balkans and for three weeks laid siege to Belgrade (July, 1456), until a relief force, recruited by the eloquence of John of Capistrano and led by John

*The Ottoman
menace*

Hunyadi, repelled the Turks with tremendous loss. Ten years later the Albanian hero, Scanderbeg, won from Mohammed II a permanent peace for his little country by the vigor of his resistance. Bosnia and Herzegovina fell to the Turks by 1483. On the sea the Turks swept all before them, although their stone shot, a foot in diameter, failed to break the courage of the Knights of St John, who saved Cyprus from the general debacle.

*Germany on
the eve of the
Renaissance*

Amid all the chaos and political disintegration which Germany experienced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there were definite signs of that activity which is somewhat confusingly called the Renaissance. The term "Renaissance" must surely be extended to embrace more than the revived interest in the art and letters of classical times, but even within such restrictions Germany had its representatives. John Müller (1436-1476) was a Greek scholar of wide reputation and a practicing astronomer; Rudolf Agricola (1443-1485) was active in spreading the study of Greek throughout Germany and attracted many able disciples to the new "Humanism," and John Wessel (1420-1489) added doctrinal criticism to his studies in Greek philosophy and Hebrew. John Reuchlin (1455-1522) was a fair example of the new intellectual curiosity which invaded every field of learning. He studied law at Orléans and philology at Paris, lectured on Greek at Tübingen, became the foremost advocate of the study of Hebrew, and won the title of the "father of Old Testament criticism." The new intellectual interest manifested itself in the establishment of educational institutions. At Deventer the Brethren of the Common Life founded the famous school which boasted Agricola and Erasmus among its scholars, while one of its nameless pupils wrote one of the greatest books of all time, *The Imitation of Christ*. Germany, which had no school of importance in the days of Charles IV, saw nine universities established between 1450 and 1506.

The development of printing was of inestimable value in the dissemination of ideas, worthy and futile. Thousands of presses were set up all over Germany (Anthony Coburger of Nüremberg operated twenty-four with the aid of a hundred apprentices), and some 30,000 works were printed before 1501. For the most part, the German population, untouched by the classical traditions of Italy, showed a preference for religious books, those dealing with social reform, or those which catered to a semiscientific curiosity. A shower of pamphlets and news leaves broke over Germany. Satire

found a ready public, especially when it was as effective as in Sebastian Brand's *Ship of Fools* (1494) or in the anonymous *Letters of Obscure Men*. The introduction of engravings and woodcuts, carried to perfection by Albrecht Dürer, not only provided a new medium in art but, being adaptable to printing, gave rise to that devastating weapon of the propagandist, the cartoon.

It was natural for satire to flourish in the fifteenth century, for there was a surfeit of things demanding amendment, and nothing more patently so than the Church. From top to bottom the Church needed drastic improvement and the councils had focused public attention upon churchmen. The spectacle of cardinals acting as hosts at banquets and balls, the knowledge that the Bishop of Strasbourg had never celebrated Mass, that some churchmen held a score or more of ecclesiastical offices, or that no inconsiderable part of the revenue of certain churches came from an income tax on prostitutes could not be treated with indifference by an age that was experiencing a distinct religious revival. If money flowed to Avignon or Rome to pay for past favors or future appointments, thousands of sincere Germans were finding consolation in pilgrimages and in the worship, if not in the collection, of relics.

The Church had failed when men and women were forced to seek their own salvation in their own way. Strange sects and heresies appeared or developed from the mysticism of the Beguines and Beghards. Most serious of all, the people seemed possessed by a terrible conviction of the existence and malevolence of witches. Men had not lost their confidence in the timely intervention of the saints, but they were coming more and more to believe in the ubiquitous activity of the Devil and his brood. The Church supported rather than suppressed the revival of a belief in witchcraft and made capital out of that terrible command, "Suffer thou not a witch to live." The little figurines of Pope Sixtus IV were commended (and sold) by the Church as efficient antidotes to the powers of darkness, while the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*) a book of diabolical stupidity, received the official sanction of the clergy. The Reformation was to have plenty of material to work on.

SUGGESTED READINGS

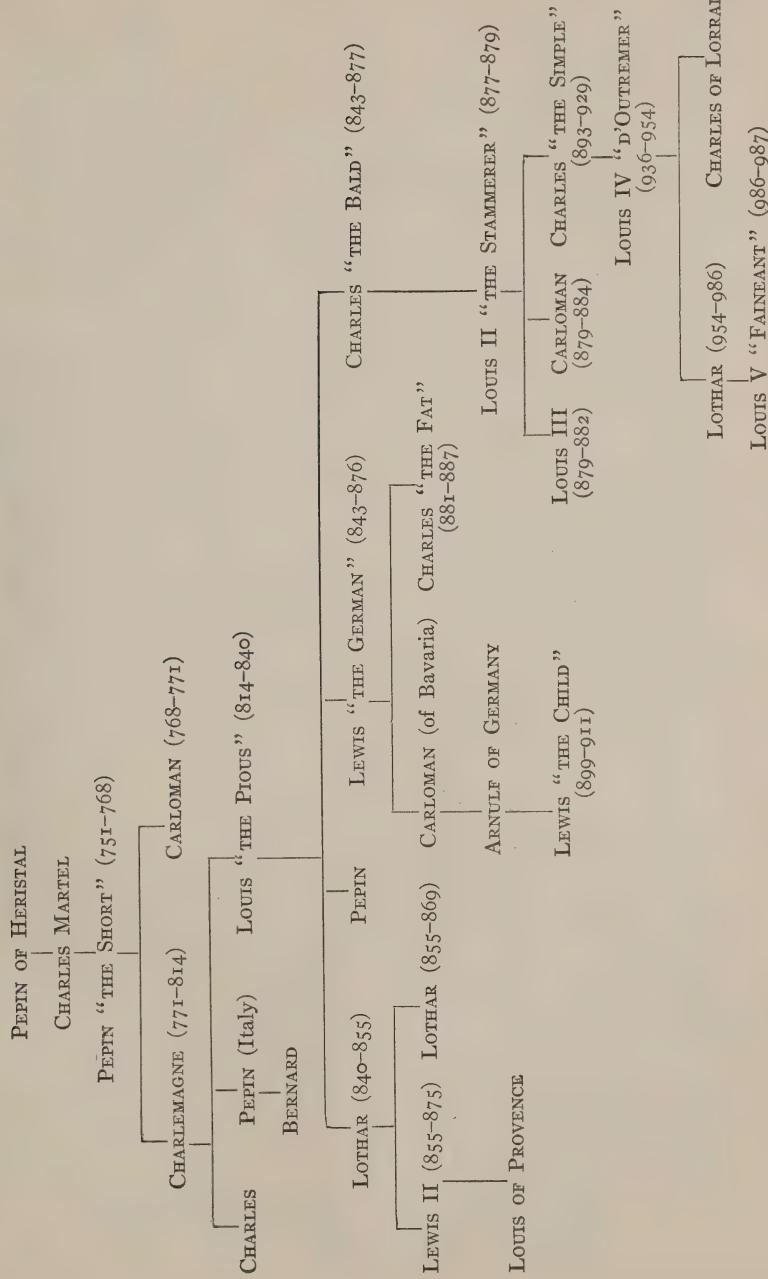
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THE HOUSE OF CAPEL

ROBERT "THE STRONG"

EUDDES OF PARIS

ROBERT (922-923)

HUGH "THE GREAT"

HUGH CAPEL (987-996)

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HENRY I (1031-1060)

PHILIP I (1060-1108)

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LOUIS IX (1226-1270) ROBERT OF ARTOIS ALFONSE OF POITOU CHARLES OF ANJOU (King of Sicily)

PHILIP III (1270-1285)

PHILIP IV "THE FAIR" (1285-1314)

CHARLES OF VALOIS *m.* MARGARET OF SICILY

PHILIP VI [Valois] (1328-1350)

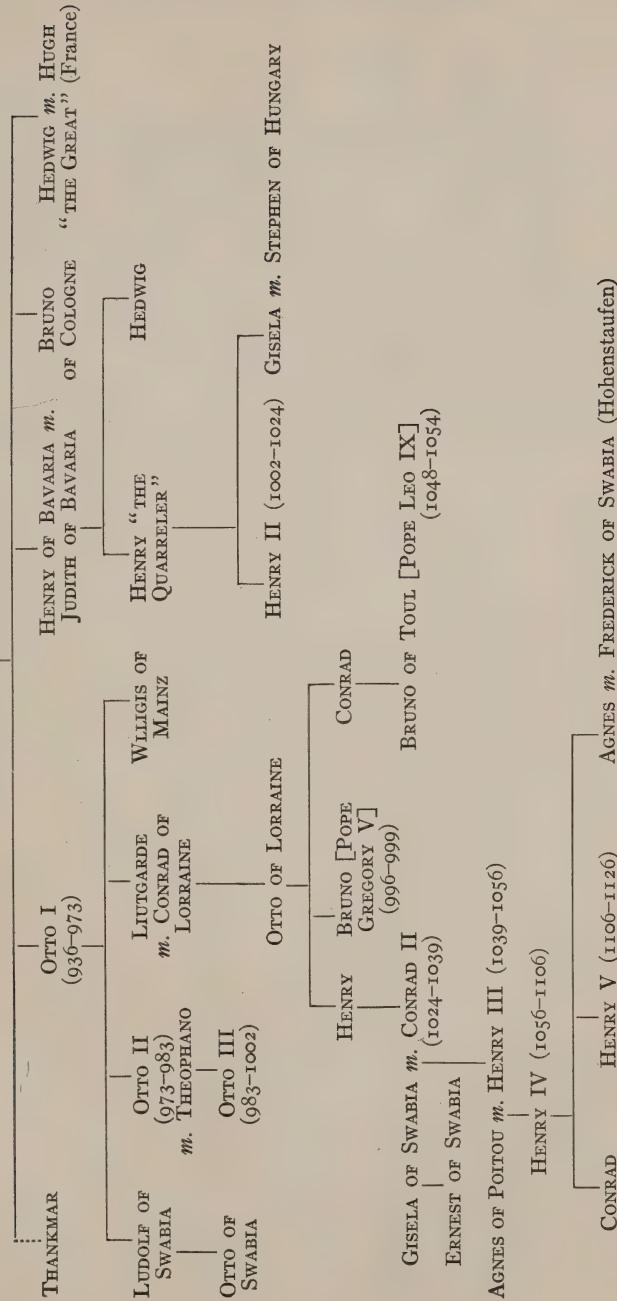
EDWARD III

JOHN JEANNE OF NAVARRE CHARLES "THE BAD"

EDWARD III

THE SAXON AND SALIAN EMPERORS

HENRY "THE FOWLER" (919-936)



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HENRY CONRAD IV (1250-1254)

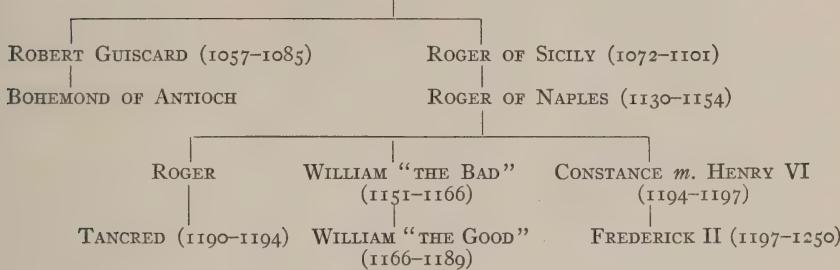
ENZIO CONRADIN

MANFRED CONSTANCE *m.* PETER III

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THE NORMANS IN SICILY

TANCRED OF HAUTEVILLE



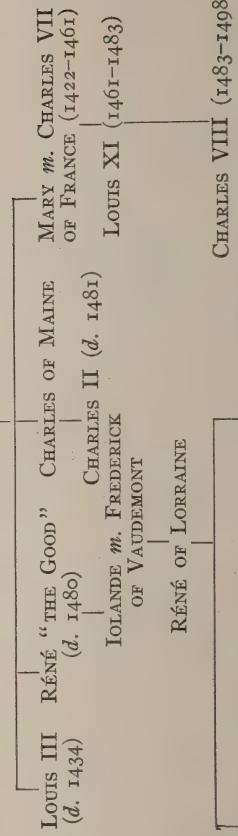
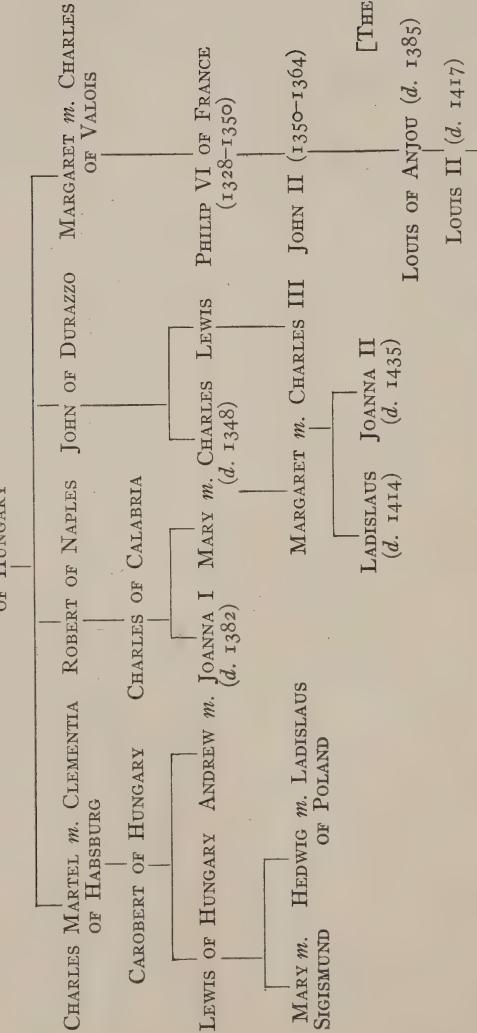
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THE "FIRST" AND "SECOND" HOUSES OF ANJOU

[THE "FIRST" HOUSE]

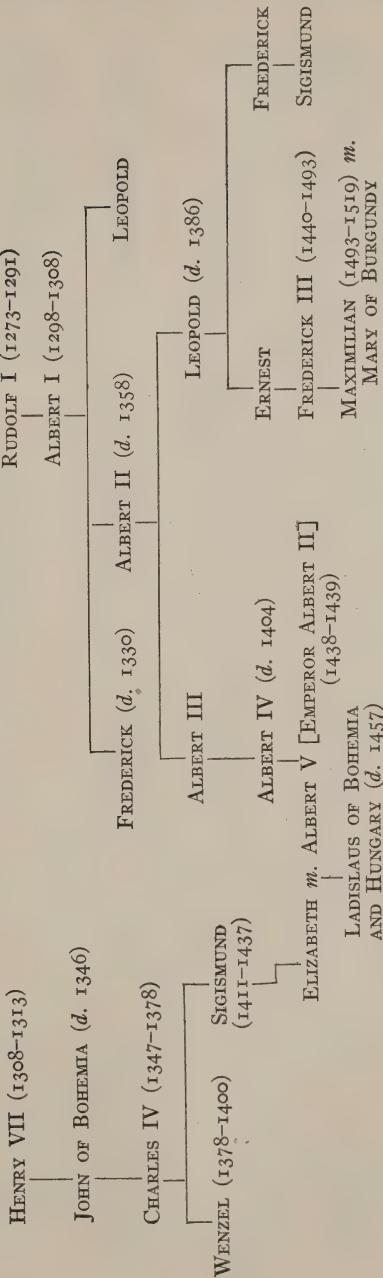
LOUIS VIII OF FRANCE (1223-1226)

LOUIS IX (1226-1270)

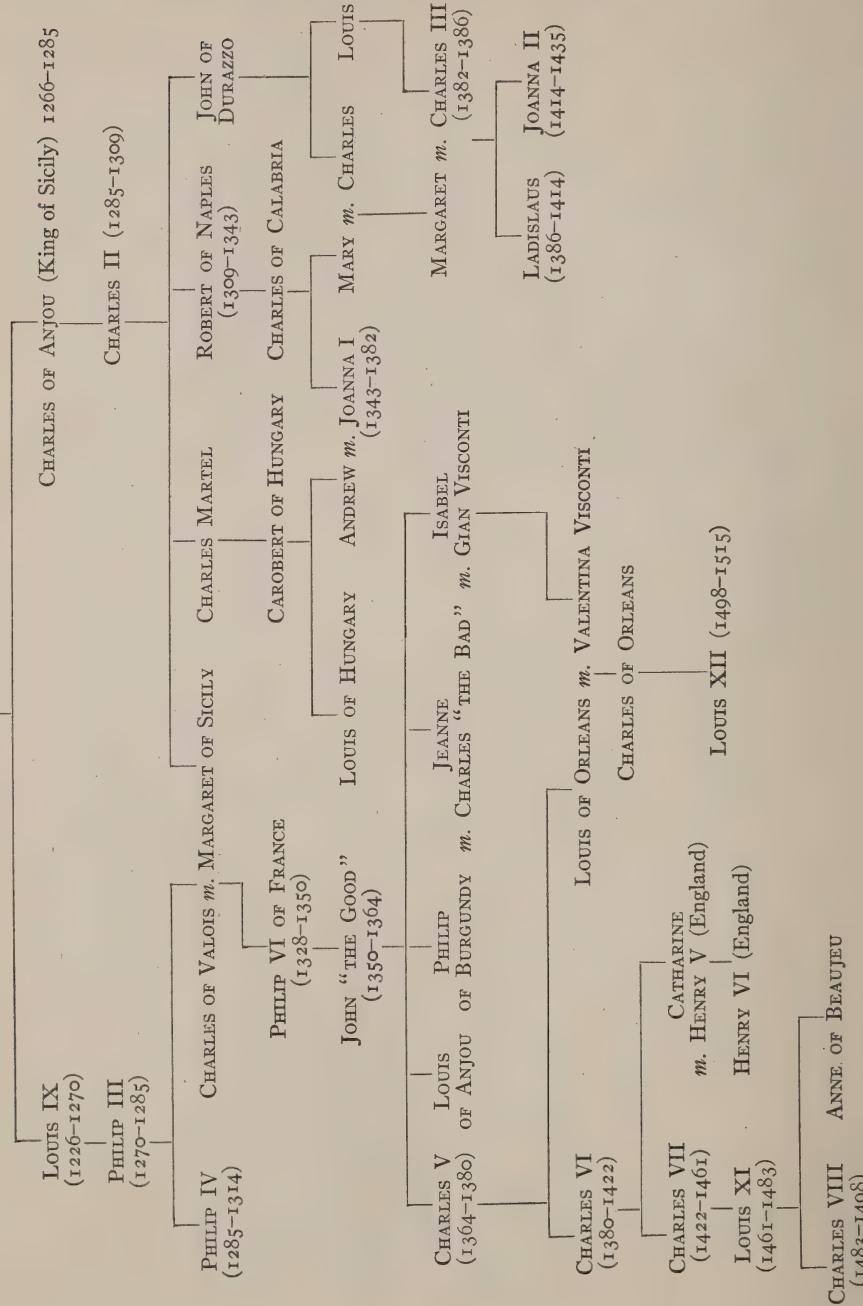
CHARLES OF ANJOU (*d.* 1295)
m. BEATRICE OF PROVENCECHARLES II (*d.* 1300) *m.* MARY
OF HUNGARY

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THE HOUSES OF LUXEMBURG AND HABSBURG



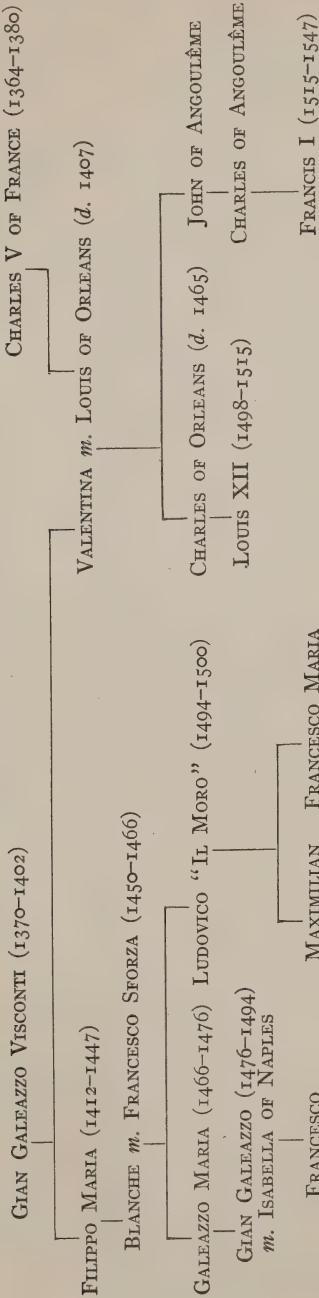
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